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ROME,

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY;

CONTAINING

A COMPLETE ACCOUNT

OF THE RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY;

THE REMAINS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE

MONUMENTS OF MODERN TIMES.

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE FINE ARTS, ON THE STATE OF SOCIETY,

AND ON THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS,

OF THE MODERN ROMANS.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE AT ROME,

IN THE YEARS 1817 AND 1818.

84020

"'Tis Rome demands our tears,
The Mistress of the World, the seat of empire,
The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,—
That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
And set the nations free,—Rome is no more!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LIBRARY OF THE SOCIETY

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PREFACE.

Some apology, or rather some explanation, seems now to be necessary, in offering to the public any book of travels whatsoever.

Every part of the known world has of late been so assiduously explored, and so industriously described, that every man ought to be nearly as well acquainted with the remotest regions of the earth as with the boundaries of his native parish; and many persons are actually better informed about any other country than their own. But in describing Rome, which has been already described so often, such an explanation seems to be more imperatively called for; yet, paradoxical as it may appear, it is the want of a good account of Rome that has induced me to attempt, in

some degree, to supply the deficiency, by the publication of these Letters: For, among all the manifold descriptions that have appeared, I do not hesitate to say, there is not one that is entitled even to the praise of accuracy. There is not one that contains any account of its antiquities, that can satisfy the antiquary —any description of its monuments of art, that can interest the man of taste—or any general information respecting its multiplied objects of curiosity and admiration, that can gratify the common inquirer. Every enlightened stranger at Rome feels the utter inefficiency of all the published accounts. He gazes on the splendid works of antiquity which surround him, lost in doubt as to their name, their date, and their destination,—bewildered with vague and contradictory statements,—wearied with exchanging one erroneous opinion for another, and unable, amidst the cloud of conjecture, even to ascertain the little that is known with certainty. The common Itineraries, as Forsyth happily observed, "are mere valets de place in print," and, withal, so given to lying, that, like the shepherd's boy in the fable, if they do chance to speak truth, they are scarcely believed. There you will find dulness without intelligence—

conjecture in place of fact—surmise advanced as certainty—truth perverted—the lights of history neglected, and all things, great and contemptible, of the highest interest, and the merest insignificance, confounded together in equality of notice. You will find more details about the different parts of one tawdry church, than the noblest monuments of antiquity; you will be directed to a thousand trifling objects not worth notice, while many of the highest interest are so passed over, as scarcely to excite attention. The intelligence they give you, when authentic, is seldom interesting, and when interesting, is rarely authentic. Our English writers, so far as concerns Rome, I must put wholly out of the question. None of them have made it their sole, or even their principal theme; and, generally speaking, the meagre accounts of it given in English books of travels, seem as if copied from other works, rather than written from actual observation, and are little more than a transmission of the errors of their predecessors.* Of the two most popular writers, Eustace is inaccurate, and

* By far the best of the very few recent tours I have read, among the many that have been published, is "Sketches of Italy," a work of considerable talent, and written with great spirit and feeling.

Forsyth inadequate. The former, indeed, might serve as a guide to the churches, if his total ignorance of the arts did not disqualify him even for that, but, in other respects, he will only serve to mislead; and Forsyth's desultory remarks, though so admirably distinguished by their acumen and originality, give us none of the information we seek, and only lead us to regret, that one so peculiarly qualified for the task, should have left it unaccomplished. It is true, that in the absence of other guides, the professed Ciceroni* of Rome are very useful to strangers on their first arrival, particularly in exhibiting and explaining the most interesting of its attractions, its remains of antiquity. But, although many of them are men of reading and information, the love of truth is unfortunately too often sacrificed to the love of system. Each embraces some favourite theory, and misrepresents facts, and even misquotes authorities, to establish his hypothesis. I do not blame any of these gentlemen because they do not know what cannot be discovered, but because they are not honest enough to avow their ignorance. But we quarrel with them as a lame

† Signore Nibby and Signore Ré deservedly enjoy the highest reputation among these gentlemen.

man does with his crutches: we get on badly with them, but we should do still worse without them, and at first, at least, their assistance will be found of considerable service. Still they cannot altogether supersede the use of books, more especially as people cannot always carry them about in their pockets.

A picture of Rome is, therefore, still a desideratum, but it is one more desirable than easy to supply. The rare and dubious lights that may be thrown upon its antiquities, are scattered through the literature of ages, and must be collected, not only from the works of all the Roman historians and classics, but from the heavy tomes of the Gothic chroniclers; and what are even more dull, and far more voluminous, the wire-spun dissertations of the Italian antiquaries. Among the numerous ponderous volumes that have been compiled on the antiquities of Rome, Nardini's *

* Roma Antica. Forsyth, who recommends Venuti, I think, can never have read him; otherwise, his sound judgment could never have panegyrised a work so dull, and so deplorably devoid of intelligence, that from its perusal nothing whatever can be gained; for, instead of clearing up what was obscure, the author contrives to render what was before clear totally dark, so that the few scattered lights we had possessed are lost in the mists he raises, and we actually end even in greater obscurity than we began.

is the only one in the least worth studying, and as a book of reference, it may prove highly useful; but such is its bulk and verbosity, that few will read it at Rome, and fewer still, I will venture to say, after they have left it. Few, indeed, will there find leisure for such uninviting research; few, when the proud remains of antiquity, and the unrivalled works of art, call upon the eye and the mind in every direction, will turn from them to pore over musty volumes.

With me the case was different. Possessed of an unconquerable passion for the study, nothing was a labour that could tend to elucidate it; my previous pursuits had turned my attention to these subjects; I had leisure, opportunities, and, I will add, industry, that few of my countrymen possessed; and, during two years, I availed myself to the utmost of every means of intelligence, of access to rare books, of the opinions of the best informed, and, above all, of the diligent study of history, pursued solely with this view.

Sincerely conscious as I am, therefore, of my incompetency to such a task, I would still hope, that diligence and ardour may have compensated in some degree for deficiency of powers. My labours were, indeed, pursued solely with

a view to the gratification of my own curiosity, and the acquisition of knowledge; and these Letters, which served me as a sort of depository, or register of all I saw and learnt, and were addressed to a friend who was then meditating a tour through Italy, were certainly not originally intended for publication; but the consciousness how valuable to myself would have been the information they contained, and the experience of its utility to many of my friends, at last led me to entertain the idea of offering it to the public, though I should never have ventured to have put it into execution, had not my purpose been confirmed by the encouragement of those whose judgment cannot admit of doubt, and whose sincerity I never had cause to distrust.

Emboldened by such approbation, I have ventured to indulge the hope that this work may serve as a guide to those who visit Rome,—may recall its remembrance to those who have seen it, and convey to those who know it not, some faint picture of that wonderful city; which boasts at once the noblest remains of antiquity, and the most faultless masterpieces of art,—which, even at the latest period of its decay, possesses more claims to interest than all others in the proudest season

of their prosperity,—which in every age has stood foremost in the world,—which has been the light of the earth in ages past,—the guiding star through the long night of ignorance,—the fountain of civilization to the whole western world,—and which every nation reverences as their common nurse, preceptor, and parent.

It is not with feelings such as we view other objects of curiosity, that we look upon Rome. We visit it with something of the same veneration with which we should approach the sepulchre of a parent. All that distinguished it once is laid in dust, but the very soil on which we tread is sacred ground; and while we linger among the proud monuments of its early glory, we feel that we ourselves, and all that surround us, are intruders on a scene, consecrated by the presence of patriots and heroes, and by every hallowed recollection of ancient greatness and virtue. Unlike all else in life, in which retrospection has small part, and our view is directed to what is passing or is to come,—at Rome, it is not the present or the future that occupies us, but the past. We seem to live with those who have gone before us, and our hearts still fondly cherish the delusion that would people these ruins with the shades of "the master spirits" by whom they

were once inhabited, and whose very names, even from childhood, have been associated with all that can ennoble and dignify our nature, with the most exalted wisdom, and the most heroic virtue.

It was well observed by Johnson, that "to abstract the mind from all local emotion, would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses,—whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathen, or whose *enthusiasm* would not grow warmer among the ruins of *Rome*."*

It is impossible not at this moment to revert to the political state and prospects of Italy, where the future as completely baffles calculation, as the events that lately happened defeated expectation. It was in the north,

* Dr Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.

not the south of Italy, that every observer looked for the dawn of its liberty. Yet, unexpected as was the revolution of Naples, I still cannot think that it is prepared for freedom, or expect that the tree of liberty, even if left to itself, and not torn hastily up by the roots, will as yet flourish there. If we judge of the future from the past, we shall not look with very sanguine hopes to the political regeneration of Italy. Doomed—

"Per servire sempre, o vincitrice o vinta."

("Conquering or conquered, still alike a slave,") all the riches and the blessings with which the prodigality of heaven has dressed her happy shores, have only served more effectually to rivet her chains. "The victim by turns of selfish and sanguinary factions, of petty tyrants, and of foreign invaders, Italy has fallen like a star from its place in heaven. She has seen her harvests trodden down by the horses of the stranger, and the blood of her children wasted in quarrels not their own."* The storm is even now gathering, that is destined to burst upon her devoted land; and if Naples fall beneath it, Rome cannot long stand: Italy,

* Hallam's Middle Ages.

from the Alps to the ocean, will once more be over-run by the Goth, and sink under a tyranny the most galling and unenlightened that has disgraced modern times. That doom, indeed, *may* yet be averted; but, in the fearful struggle between foreign despotism and force, and domestic weakness and division, who will venture to predict the eventual triumph of independence?

For the frequency of the observations contained in these Letters, on the inexhaustible treasures of sculpture and painting which fill the museums of Rome, I have no apology to offer, unless, indeed, *they* themselves will plead my excuse. It is not easy to see unmoved, or pass unnoticed, the most faultless models of art,—the proudest triumphs of genius,—and though, aware that description can convey no adequate image of beauty or perfection, I have endeavoured to restrain myself from expatiating on them as much as possible; yet, the tongue will speak of that on which the fancy loves to dwell. From childhood, the pleasures afforded by literature and the arts, have been my solace and delight; and I can truly say, that they are the only "roses without thorns" that have strewed my path of life.

Upon Italian literature, however, I have said little. The subject has of late been canvassed, until it is completely exhausted. All the bright productions of its earlier days are celebrated through the world, and there is little new that deserves very high applause. Its former excellence cannot meet with too much praise, but its present state seems to me to be prodigiously over-rated.

The observations on the morals and manners of the Italians, may seem to many, especially to those who do not know them, to be unjustifiably severe. I can only say, that when I left England, my prejudices, if I had any, were in favour of foreign society—that my judgment was formed upon a constant intercourse with all ranks, from the highest to the lowest,—that, if it be unfavourable, it was passed with reluctance, and that I should be truly glad to be convinced that it was erroneous. But, I found in the Italian circles, all the emptiness, the frivolousness, the heartlessness, and the licentiousness of the French, without any of their polish and brilliancy; and with all, and more than all, our lifelessness and *ennui*. Like the French, the Italians live in perpetual *representation;* like them, they sacrifice *l'être au paroitre*. The

study of both nations is to *seem* gay, rich, wise, witty, learned, and pious. But, whatever be the object of an Englishman's ambition he labours to *become*. Their manners may sometimes shine more in the glitter of a drawing-room, but their charm will not be found like ours in the domestic circle. They put them on like their coats to go abroad in, but at home their habits are as slovenly as the dressing-gowns they sit in. An Englishman, by his own fire-side, neither lays aside his manners nor his dress. Nor is it only in domestic life that our superiority consists; at the hazard of being accused of national partiality, I will maintain, that not only is the society abroad generally inferior to our own, but that in Italy there is nothing worthy of the name of society at all.

Every one who has known the continent during the last half century, allows, that society has everywhere changed for the worse; but while it has been deteriorating abroad, it has been improving at home. It has acquired ease and elegance, without losing propriety and decorum; and the more we mix in the society of other countries, the more, certainly, we shall return with redoubled zest to the intelligence, the refinement, the sincerity, and

the nice sense of propriety, which distinguish our own. It is true, that it is sometimes deficient in gaiety, in vivacity, in the sparkle of lively nothings, in the *laisser aller* of conversation, in that *esprit de societé* in which the French excel every other nation; but if we must choose between froth and substance, and if we cannot unite both,—who would not prefer the latter?

The following letters are arranged according to the nature of the subjects, without any reference to the dates, which the author has not thought it worth while to preserve. Those containing a sketch of the first glimpse of Florence, and of the journey from thence to Rome, are inserted, that the Reader may be enabled to understand something of its peculiar situation, and judge of it, in comparison with other parts of Italy.

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ERRATA.

The Reader is respectfully requested to correct the few following errata, which are indispensible to the sense or grammar:

Page 32, line 17, *for* "the vallies," *read* these vallies.
51, 20, *for* "Lieto," *read* Lieta.
79, 14, *for* "murmurs," *read* murmur.
92, 1, *for* "1817," *read* 1816.
97, 15 from the bottom, *for* "which rose beneath," *read* beneath which rose.
106, 18, *for* "tuta," *read* tota.
113, last line, note, *for* "Coliseo," *read* Colisea.
163, 9, *for* "mas," *read* master.
169, 5, *for* "triumphal car," *read* car.
200, 3, note, *for* "quies," *read* quibus.
240, 6 from bottom, *for* "Casu," *read* Casa.
274, 3, *for* "panis perna," *read* pane perna.
347, 7 from the bottom, *for* "litis," *read* littus.

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ROME.

LETTER I.

FLORENCE, *December* 5, 1816.

"We are here to-day," as my uncle Toby says, "but gone to-morrow;" at least I hope so—for Rome, the object of all our thoughts and desires, which we have so long ardently wished, and so little, till lately, expected ever to see—Rome is at length before us, and the nearer we approach to it, the more impatient we become to reach it; so that, in spite of all the attractions of Florence, and all the intreaties of our friends, though we only arrived last night, we set off to-morrow morning. We had resolved to see nothing here till our return; but it is easier to form such resolutions than to keep them; and we found it impossible to resist giving a passing glance to a few of the many far-famed objects of interest this seat of art contains. Immediately after breakfast, therefore, we set off

on our tour, and our first visit, as you may imagine, was to the Venus de Medicis, whose morning levee we found already crowded with a circle of the ardent admirers, who daily pour forth their rapturous adoration at her feet. With feelings of high-wrought expectation we entered the [illegible]ce-chamber; a crimson, octagonal hall of the gallery called the Tribune, where, bright in eternal youth and matchless beauty, "stands the statue that enchants the world."

But my expectations had been so highly raised, and, I suppose, so far exceeded possibility, that my first sensation, I confess it with shame, was disappointment, nay, I am by no means sure that it was not in some degree my last; for although new beauties continually rose upon me as I contemplated her form of perfect symmetry, and more than feminine grace, the soul was wanting; the expression, the sentiment I sought for, was not there; she did not come up to the soul-seducing image in my mind. It was not a goddess, nor a celestial being that I saw before me—it was a woman, a lovely and graceful woman certainly;—but still I am disposed to think that I have actually seen women, real living women, almost as beautiful, and far more interesting; and, indeed, to confess the truth, I thought her legs were rather thick, and her face very insipid. But remember, that in giving you my undissembled opinion, I make an honest avowal, not a presumptuous criticism; I know that the censure I would pass on her recoils on myself—that it does not prove her want

of beauty, but my own want of taste; and, convinced of this mortifying truth, I quitted her presence at last, with no small vexation to find that I could not feel, as I ought, the full force of that unapproached perfection, which has rendered this renowned [illegible] the idol of successive generations, the triumph of art, and the standard of taste. I suppose, after confessing myself disappointed in this, it signifies not what I can say of any thing else; but I cannot pass wholly unnoticed the beautiful Grecian statues, the pride of Florence, that, inferior only to its boasted Venus, are ranged around her, like satellites around a planet. I say *inferior*, for beautiful as they are, they are not to be compared with her. The dullest perception, and the most perverted taste, must be struck with her superiority. Far as she fell below my, perhaps extravagant, expectations, as far she surpasses every statue that I have ever seen, or perhaps ever may see. But I expected the distance that divided her from the rest to be more immense—and I found, or fancied, defects, when I looked for nothing but unapproached perfection. But let us turn from the Venus to the Whetter, or Rémouleur, or Arrotino, or by whatever name, English, French, or Italian, the famous statue of a kneeling slave, whetting his knife, is to be called. This admirable figure is represented in the act of suspending his employment, and looking up as if to listen to something that is said to him.

It is generally supposed that he represents a slave overhearing the conspiracy of Catiline; but I can-

not remember that any slave did overhear that conspiracy, neither do I see how any body can be so very sure that he is overhearing any conspiracy at all. To me his countenance expresses none of that astonishment, horror, and eager curiosity, that the surreptitious listener to such a daring and momentous plot would naturally feel: but if he must needs be overhearing a conspiracy, the supposition that it was that formed by the sons of Brutus, which really was discovered in this manner, is surely more probable.—Livy, (you will please to observe, I am fresh from reading him) Livy tells us, that a slave who had previously suspected, and even learnt something of their plans, overheard the conspirators at supper, talking over their treasonable designs, and obtained the means of convicting them, by finding out where and when their letters might be seized.* Now the expression of this statue seems to me to accord perfectly with this situation. The full confirmation of his suspicions; the conviction that he had the traitors in his power; the certainty that he could give the information that would ruin them, and make his own fortune—all this I fancied I could see in it; but it may very probably be nothing but fancy. The attitude of the man sharpening his knife upon a whetstone, made me once think that it might be intended for Accius Navius, that famous soothsayer, who, in answer to Tarquin's question, declared "he could

* Livy, l. ii. c. 4.

do what the king was thinking of;" and when the monarch tauntingly replied, "I was thinking whether you could cut that whetstone through with a razor," immediately severed it in two. The statue of this miraculous soothsayer was placed in the Forum: but I dont think I can prove either that this figure is a soothsayer, or that he is cutting stones with a razor, so that I shall not insist upon your believing it; though it might represent him in the moment in which he listened to the king's speech.

Be it what it may, however, it is a work of no common genius, and may perhaps be considered as faultless in its kind. The unknown artist, indeed, has not aspired to the lofty height of ideal beauty; he has not sought to realize the forms that visit the fancy of inspired genius, or reveal to mortal sight the shape inhabited by a deity. But in that which he has attempted his success is complete. It is common nature and life—true, forcible, and energetic, that arrest our attention; and so correctly just, so highly finished is the execution, that we may imagine it one of those statues which, in early Greece, we know it was the labour of a life to perfect. This statue was restored by Michael Angelo with a skill scarcely inferior to the original. The parts wanting were so admirably replaced by his chisel, that it may be said to have lost nothing.

In the famous groupe of the Wrestlers, the flex-

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* Livy, l. i. c. 36.

ibility of the entwined limbs, the force of the muscles, and the life and action of the figures, are wonderful; but the heads are totally destitute of meaning, and don't look as if they belonged to the bodies;* their fixed immoveable countenances have no marks even of that corporeal exertion, much less of that eager animation and passion which men struggling with each other in the heat of contest, and at the moment in which the victor triumphs over the vanquished, would naturally feel.

The dancing Faun, playing on the cymbals, is all life and animation, and his jocund face expresses so much delight in his own performance, that it is impossible not to sympathize in his mirth, and it is all one can do to refrain from beginning to caper about with him. Somebody observed, that he looked too old to be dancing with so much agility; and perhaps the criticism might be just if he were a man; but as a faun, I imagine his nature is to be forever joyous.

These three pieces of sculpture, the Whetter, the Wrestlers, and the dancing Faun, are unique, and are therefore valuable as well for their rarity as their beauty.

A little Apollo is very much admired; and perhaps his greatest fault is his diminutive size, which, in spite of his symmetry and uncommon grace, renders him but a contemptible representative of the god of light and majesty. He is in the attitude

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* I afterwards found that this is actually the case, and that the heads are modern.

of the Lycian Apollo—one arm thrown over his head. Beside the Venus, he looks mean and effeminate. He suffers more from her neighbourhood than the other statues, because more in the same style of beauty. No female form has been suffered to approach her—none could stand the comparison.

We saw the Goddess of Beauty in painting as well as sculpture. On the wall of the room behind the statue, my eye was caught by two celebrated Venuses of Titian; one of which, however, is incomparably superior to the other. It is, indeed, an exquisite painting. She is represented voluptuously reclining on a couch, with flowers in her hand, while two hideous old women, who are opening a chest in the back ground, seem to be introduced for no other purpose, than to heighten, by contrast, the charms of the youthful beauty.

Thus the finest Venuses that painting and sculpture ever produced, meet the eye at the same moment.

I suppose I have no soul for Venuses, for my attention soon wandered from them to Raphael's St John the Baptist; one of the finest productions of that inimitable master. St John is alone in the wilderness, left, amid solitude and silence, to nature and to God. His only clothing is a leopard's skin half thrown round his graceful limbs; and his youth, not yet matured to manhood, derives deeper interest from his deserted situation, and from that glow of devoted enthusiasm which lights up

his countenance, and proclaims him equal to do, to dare, and to suffer, all that may be required of him by Heaven. The fire of a prophet, and the fervour of a saint, flash in his dark eye, and the spirit of divine inspiration seems to raise him above mortality. This great picture is an example at once of the finest conceptions of elevated genius, and the execution of the most finished art.

In a very different style is the portrait of the Fornarina, a woman so called from being the wife of a baker, but famed from being the beautiful and beloved mistress of Raphael, who himself painted her, as it would seem, *con amore*, for the portrait is the very perfection of female loveliness, and combines all the breathing life and magic colouring of the Venetian school, with a truth of design and expression its best masters could never boast.* The eye dwells on it with never-satiated delight, and the unlearned and the connoisseur equally experience its fascination. What cold critic can discover a fault while he contemplates it; and who, after seeing it, can say, that Raphael was no colourist?

The Tribune is filled with masterpieces of painting by the first Italian artists; but I must not speak

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* When this was written I had never been at Venice, and consequently never seen those unrivalled master-pieces of Titian, which are inferior to nothing that painting ever produced. No one can judge of Titian out of Venice, or of Raphael out of Rome; and I might add, of Corregio out of Parma.

of those beauties which one eager transient glance gave to my view. There was one among them, however, the work of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, which I beheld with inexpressible astonishment; and if it be really his, I can only say, that some of those old women, to whom he left oil painting as a fit employment, might have gone near to have rivalled him in it.

The gallery itself is filled with a double row of ancient statues, and the walls are adorned with a series of pictures, chiefly valuable as illustrating the history of the art, from its revival by Cimabue in the 13th century to the present times.

Twenty rooms, or cabinets, of which the Tribune is one, run along in a suite behind the gallery, and open into it. They are filled with the choicest treasures of the Museum—with specimens of the different schools of painting, separately arranged—with the portraits of painters, which fill one room—with the most valuable sculptures—with ancient inscriptions, bronzes, gems, Etruscan and Grecian vases, of terra cotta and marble, adorned with painting and sculptures; among which is the famous Medicean vase, generally considered the finest in the world, of the most perfect form, the grandest dimensions, and the most exquisite sculpture. It represents the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and I need scarcely say is a work of Grecian art.

One of these rooms is entirely filled with the most costly and ingenious works in precious stones. Here are heads and figures of Roman emperors and Catholic saints; of princely sinners and pious popes of

the house of Medici, who have hats of jet, faces of agate, eyes of opal, coats and petticoats of lapis lazuli, legs of jasper, and shoes of porphyry. My eye was dazzled with a profusion of vases of crystal, with candlesticks and crucifixes composed of gems of every varied colour; with diminutive columns and mimic temples; goblets that might serve for the banquets of gods, cups fit for fairies, and jewels worth the eye of an emperor.

But there are two rooms filled with what is still more valuable—the finest collection of ancient and modern vases in the world. Leaving the famous Etruscan Chimera and Orator, and all other ancient monsters and men, to be described by heads of more learning and leisure than mine, let me speak my admiration of the unrivalled Mercury of John of Bologna,—aerial, spirited, designing, full of art and purpose—quick in intellect, invention, and rare device—it is Hermes himself, the winged messenger of the gods, that hovers for a moment before our eyes, "just lighted on a heaven-kissing hill," one foot alone pressing the earth, his plumes still fluttering, and his limbs so ready to spring again into air, that we almost fear he will disappear from our sight. He rests on the head of a Zephyr, a beautiful poetic thought. Surely in some favoured moment the god must have revealed himself to the artist, and touched him with his wand; for mere mortal imagination, unassisted, could never have formed so happy a conception. The fame of John of Bologna, beyond the Alps at least, is, I think, by no means equal to his extraordinary

merit. This exquisite statue is far beyond any modern work I have ever seen, and is excelled only by a few masterpieces of ancient art.

We entered the hall of Niobe, in which, to my inexpressible amazement, I beheld her sixteen sons and daughters, all separately dying in various attitudes round the room. The majority of these ladies and gentlemen reminded me of a set of bad actors on the stage, throwing themselves into studied and affected postures, in order to expire with effect. The number of them, all giving up the ghost at once, like the dramatis personæ of Tom Thumb, and ranged at regular distances in a formal circle, is perhaps the grand source of the burlesque. If viewed singly, they would not be so absurd.

Niobe herself, however, is true tragedy. She is bending over her youngest child, who clings to her knees; and while, in an agony of maternal love, she encircles with her arm the most helpless of her devoted progeny, conscious despairing inability to save is expressed in every lineament of the living marble. The powerful pathos and the deep-seated expression of agonizing grief which speak in her countenance and gesture, find their way at once to the heart.

This groupe is in the grand style of sculpture, and possesses all the serene majesty and chaste simplicity of the pure Grecian school. Some trifling faults of detail may perhaps be found. Though the form is on a semi-colossal scale, yet surely the arms are of disproportionate thickness. One of

them, however, and several other parts of the statue, have been restored by unknown and bungling artists. The effect of the figure and drapery too, when viewed from behind, is rather ludicrous, so that it makes you cry on one side, and laugh on the other. But a statue should preserve its character and excellence in every point of view; and while I am writing, it occurs to me, like a faintly remembered dream, that I have heard the supposition, that Niobe once adorned the tympanum of some Grecian temple of Apollo or Diana. If so, it could never have been viewed from behind, and this accounts for the inattention of the sculptor to its appearance in this position. How different, too, must have been the effect of her children, all combined into one grand groupe, with her own commanding figure in the centre, forming one overpowering scene of grief and horror, to what they now exhibit detached,—destroying, instead of contributing to the effect of each other, and posted in a stiff formal circle to look ridiculous!

In quitting the gallery, we passed Venus in a great variety of forms, but it was not always that we could recognize in them her claims to be the Goddess of Beauty; a pretty little crouching Venus alone caught my fancy. We afterwards walked through a long suite of superb, cold state apartments in the Palazzo Pitti, the residence of the Grand Duke, to see the Venus of Canova; so that it was my lot in this one day to see more Venuses than I ever saw before in the whole course of my life. I have no hesitation in saying, that this just-

ly celebrated modern Venus far surpasses all the ancient Venuses in the gallery, excepting the Venus de Medicis, but she greatly falls short of that, I mean in perfection, for she certainly exceeds it in height. She is represented as coming out of the bath, and drawing round her beautiful form a drapery, one end of which she has raised from the ground, and presses to her bosom with the most graceful modesty imaginable.

I will not tax your patience with any further encomium on her beauties, but content myself with observing, that whatever trifling faults the eye of fastidious criticism may detect in this admirable statue, it is an honour to the age that produced it, and sufficient of itself to place its author in the rank of first-rate sculptors.

The Palazzo Pitti contains one of the finest collections of paintings that Italy can boast, but we had no leisure to examine them.

From the splendid palace of the Arch-Dukes, we went to their more splendid tomb. We first entered the anti-chapel, or Capello de' Depositi, built by Michael Angelo Buonarotti; and, notwithstanding that great name, you must permit me to say the truth, that the architecture is below criticism. The unfinished statues which adorn the sepulchres, the work of the same great artist, are grand, daring, and original in their conception, the offspring of a mighty mind. An allegorical figure, called, I think, Evening, of a man sinking to sleep on one of the tombs, and Morning, a female form rising from slumber, together with the

statue of a Lorenzo, (not the Magnificent,) seated in a pensive attitude, his head resting on his hand which is supported on his knee, above the sarcophagus that holds his remains, struck me as the finest.

Unfinished statues are not legitimate subjects of criticism; but I will own that, "with all their imperfections on their heads," these are, in my humble opinion, the best productions I have yet seen of Michael Angelo, and that I have been woefully disappointed in them all. His native city indeed contains few finished works of the great Florentine; and, if I may say so without presumption, none worthy of his fame. In the gallery I saw nothing of his except his earliest attempt, the Mask of a Faun; the fine, but unfinished bust of Brutus; and the Bacchus, which, if it had not been inscribed with his name, I never could have believed to have been his work. It is one of the most hideous and disgusting statues I ever beheld. A form meagre even to extenuation, and awkward to excess, with an expression of face and figure nearly approaching idiotism, represents the God of Mirth and Wine, who most certainly would have had few worshippers under such a semblance. If the object of the sculptor was to give a moral lesson, by thus representing the disgusting effects of intemperance, as the Spartans used to exhibit the intoxicated Helots to their children, he has certainly obtained his aim; but if he wanted to produce a fine statue, I cannot but think he has failed.

It is, however, said, that Michael Angelo, incen-

sed at the depreciating criticisms of his contemporaries, and convinced they arose from envy, finished his statue with great secrecy; and having broken off one of its arms, buried it where he knew it must soon be dug up.' The connoisseurs of the day, taking it for an antique, immediately pronounced it to be a masterpiece; and even tauntingly asked, when Michael Angelo would execute such a work? It may be imagined with what pride and pleasure the artist produced the broken arm, and proved it to be his own. It is my misfortune to differ from connoisseurs, and if this statue were proved to be the work of Phidias, I could not be brought to admire it.

I begin to be convinced I have no taste. But let any one, not dazzled with the lustre of a name, compare any of the works of Michael Angelo existing in Florence, with the bronze Mercury of John of Bologna, and honestly say to which the preference is due.

From this anti-chapel of tombs, we entered the heavy and gloomy, but most magnificent Mausoleum of the Dukes of the Medici line; whose walls, encrusted with every variety of precious marbles, and more precious gems, form a striking contrast to its dome of bare brick; for this parody of human greatness never was, and I suppose never will be, finished. We passed unheeded the gorgeous monuments that fill its niches; but in the adjacent church of San Lorenzo, there was one tomb which arrested our steps, and called forth our veneration. There, beneath a plain flag-stone, trodden by every foot, re-

pose the ashes of Cosmo di Medici, "the father of his country."

This simple inscription, "Pater Patriæ," conferred on him by the spontaneous gratitude of his fellow citizens, and more eloquent of praise than volumes of eulogium, is all that marks his unpretending grave. His patriotic spirit would never have designed a work of such private pride and public inutility, as the magnificent temple which the vanity of his degenerate successors projected for their unhonoured dust. They rest forgotten in marble sarcophagi, while the memory of Cosmo, who laid the foundation, not merely of a dynasty, but of a state; who gave his name not only to his country, but his age, and who is immortalized not by his conquests, but his virtues; the memory of Cosmo di Medici is written on a more durable monument than brass or marble—on the hearts of mankind, and in the impartial page of history.

There, his example records the useful lesson that princes, by cherishing the arts of peace, may gain that imperishable glory which far surpasses the fading laurels of military renown; that there are other and surer paths to fame and greatness, than the bloody and uncertain road of conquest; and that the ruler of a small and free state may leave a name behind him, which the despotic master of empires can never equal. Yes! the kings and conquerors of this world may go down to the dust unnoticed and forgotten, but the name of Cosmo di Medici will be revered and blessed while honour and virtue are upon the earth.

Lorenzo the Magnificent is buried near his grandfather. To the wise and benignant institutions of Cosmo, Florence, previously oppressed by the tyranny of her bishops, and distracted by the dissensions of her nobles, owed independence, prosperity, free commerce, and wealth. From those of Lorenzo, she derived the precious gifts of arts and letters, which have crowned her with fame through succeeding generations: but while we venerate the memory of these truly great and enlightened men, how doubly deep do we execrate the names of their unworthy successors, to whose usurpations their very virtues had paved the way, and who, while they placed on their brows a barren ducal crown, trampled under foot the lost liberties of their country!

The adjoining Laurentian Library, founded by Lorenzo the Magnificent, contains a very rare and numerous collection of valuable manuscripts, amongst which, the most remarkable is the Pandects of Justinian, said to have been found at Amalfi, and which, wherever it came from, is of undoubted authenticity, and proved the fountain of modern jurisprudence. It was produced for our inspection with great care, and is in admirable preservation. The manuscript Travels of Cosmo, the third duke, through England and Holland, adorned with views, were shown to us, but we had no leisure to examine them. From the cursory glance I gave, they seemed to be less the work of the prince than of his secretary.

We could not leave Florence without taking one glance at its vaunted Cathedral, of which the proud octagonal dome, the predecessor of St. Peter's, towering far above every other church, forms so striking a feature in every view of the city. Its campanile, or belfry, does not form a part of the building, but stands by its side, a lofty isolated tower. Near to it is the pavilion-shaped baptistery; and thus what would be all comprised within one church in England, in Italy forms three distinct but contiguous buildings. They stand in a fine open situation, and are built of, or rather incrusted with, black and white marble, placed in alternate horizontal stripes, so that they look exactly as if dressed up in a black and white striped gown. A fine building should be composed of one substance and one hue, and is never so noble as when it seems one grand homogeneous mass, a hollowed mountain of stone; even the notched squares of brick or mason-work, by which the eye traces the slow labour of aggregation that formed it, invariably impair the grand effect of the whole. In the edifices we are now considering, the diversity of colour and patched piecemeal effect, are so totally destructive of that unity of appearance which is an indispensible requisite to architectural grandeur, and give them such an air of indescribable meanness, that neither their imposing elevation, their rich materials, nor their profusion of ornament, could prevent me from considering them as monuments of a false and meretricious taste.

The inside of the Cathedral, like the out, is of a spurious Gothic, a sort of jumble of Gothic and Grecian; it is inlaid, carved, and paved with marble; and yet, in spite of all this magnificence, it is dingy, dirty, bare-looking, and neglected. "The paintings," says Eustace, in describing it, "are generally masterpieces of the art." What was my astonishment when I found, that there was nothing to be seen except a few old portraits, (among which is a likeness of Sir John Hawkwood, that famous English knight, who played so distinguished a part at the head of the Italian condottieri;) and that the whole Cathedral does not contain any thing, which even a laquais de place could pretend to be a tolerable picture, though all that tribe do certainly make a practice of shewing as capital paintings, such black, dusky, unintelligible daubs, that I marvel how there should be a church without one.

This Cathedral is adorned with some dirty statues of old bishops and evangelists, and with an unfinished altar-piece of marble, the last work of Buonarotti, which represents *La Pietà*, as the image of the Virgin mourning over the dead body of Christ is uniformly called, whether in painting or sculpture. It was before the high altar of this Cathedral,* during the celebration of mass, in the year 1478, that Julian de Medicis was murdered by the hand of Francesco Pazzi, his disappointed rival.

* I was mistaken. It happened in the Church of La Reparata, now La Madonna del Fiore.

His brother, Lorenzo the Magnificent, was severely wounded, and narrowly escaped with life from the hands of the conspirators, among whom was Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa. They were all immediately executed, without even the form of a trial; in fact, no proof could be wanting of a crime publicly committed in the face of assembled multitudes, and for which, from the rank and power of the parties, if punishment had been deferred, it might have been altogether evaded. Undoubtedly the perpetrators of such a desperate deed trusted for impunity to success and force of arms, not to concealment. This horrible conspiracy is said to have been formed by the reigning pope, Sextus IV. who was jealous of the growing power of the Medici; but the origin of this murder, if we may credit the historians of the day, was love, not ambition. At a tournament given by Lorenzo the Magnificent, his younger brother Julian, and Francesco Pazzi, of a family which bore hereditary enmity to the Medici, both fell desperately in love with the noted beautiful Camilla Caffarelli. After a long courtship, Julian was the favoured lover. He made her his bride; and, not long afterwards, fell a victim to the rage of his vindictive rival, at the very altar of God.

Above that altar, the statue of God himself, the Eternal Father, was pointed out to me, sitting behind some candlesticks! Inexpressibly shocked, I asked the lacquey if it was really meant for the Supreme Being. "Sicuro!" he replied, no less astonished on his side, at the abhorrence I ex-

pressed at the sight of a statue, which he had already assured me was "Bella Assai!" and moreover, the work of Baccio Bandinelli.

It was some time before I recovered from my amazement, and it is not too strong an expression to say, horror. The image of God, fashioned by the hands of man, was to me the excess of profanation, and the sight of it was to my eyes what blasphemy would be to my ears. But the Italians seem to think representations of the Deity in painting and sculpture neither impious nor reprehensible, and not a whit more presumptuous or profane than those of the Madonna and the Redeemer; not considering that *they* lived and walked the earth in human form; but that "eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" that Supreme Being, who dwelleth in the heavens, eternal and alone.

The image of "the Eternal Father," indeed, is less common than any other in Italian churches, only, I apprehend, because He is less the object of worship. The Virgin is beyond all comparison the most adored. Particular saints, in particular places, may indeed divide with her the general homage, but they enjoy at best only a local, and sometimes a transient popularity; a saint that is held in great esteem at one town, being perhaps thought nothing of at another, and even when at the height of favour, occasionally falling into disgrace; whereas the worship of the Virgin is universal in all places, and by all people; not only, as I had fancied before I entered Italy, by females,

who might think her, on account of her sex, their most appropriate and zealous intercessor, but equally by men, and by priests as well as laymen. After the Virgin, some of the principal saints seem to be the most worshipped, then our Saviour, and lastly, God. Shocking as this may appear, it is too true. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say, that throughout Italy, Spain, Portugal, and every country where the Catholic is the exclusive religion of the people, for one knee bent to God, thousands are bowed before the shrines of the Virgin and the saints. I know I shall be told by the advocates of that religion, that they are addressed only as mediators at the throne of the Most High; that the worship, seemingly paid to these images, is offered to themselves; to their *essence* as saints and spirits alone. Such may very probably be the doctrine of the clergy, when on their guard, and more especially to Protestants; but hear the belief of the people whom they teach; with them, it is in the image that all the virtue and holiness resides; and if this were not the case, if an image of a saint or a Madonna were considered as nothing more than their visible representation, why should one be better than another? Why should distant pilgrimages be performed, and crowds flock to worship some one particular image, if it had no particular power or virtue? And why should there be any miracle-working images at all?

But more of this hereafter. At present let me get you out of the Cathedral, first giving you a glance of the faded, time-worn picture of Dante, the sole repenting tribute Florence ever paid to

the son whom she expelled, disgraced, and persecuted through life, though, after his death, she contended, with vain importunity, and even humble supplication, for his remains. But they repose "far from his ungrateful country," and are the glory of Ravenna, which gave him, in exile, an honourable asylum,—in death, a tomb.

Tired as we were with sight-seeing, we could not pass the Baptistery without stopping to admire one of its three gates, of bronze, (for I am sure it could only have been that one) which drew from Michael Angelo, in his ecstacy of admiration, the memorable exclamation, "that they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise." They are of bronze, and represent, in basso relievo, and in small separate compartments—forming perfect pictures—the history of the Old Testament, beginning with the creation of man. It is impossible not to be charmed with the exquisite grace and beauty of the figures, and the art with which the story is told; they even reminded me, in design, sentiment, and expression, of the pictures of Raphael. But I need not add my feeble tribute of praise to a work, which has been stamped with the approbation of Buonarotti.

They were executed by Laurentio Ghiberto, a Florentine, who flourished in the ——, I am sorry I cannot remember positively what —— century, but I believe the fourteenth. The second gate, representing the history of the New Testament, though said to be by the same artist, struck me as so decidedly inferior, that I can scarcely believe it

shared the equal commendation of the great sculptor; and as to the third, which is the work of a native of Pisa, whose name I have forgotten, it is not to be compared to either of them.

Having thus run through more things in a day than we could attentively see in a month, we finished our morning's survey of the treasures of Florence, and returned to the hotel by the side of the Arno, in whose clear waters the glow of the setting sun was reflected in the richest hues of heaven. The situation of Florence is singularly delightful. It stands in one of the most fertile plains, and on the margin of one of the most classic streams in the world, at the base of the lofty chain of Appenines, which, sweeping round to the north, seem to screen it from the storms of winter, while their sides, hung with chesnut woods, and their peaks glittering with snow, rise far above the graceful slope and vine-covered height of Fiesole, whose utmost summit, crowned with a convent half hid in a deep cypress grove, overlooks "Florence the fair."

My impressions of the city itself, from this hasty survey, were, that it possesses in no common degree the common advantages and resources that form an attractive residence, and many very uncommon ones besides.—Commodious houses, good shops and markets, cheapness and plenty, extensive and accessible libraries, public amusements, elegant society, arts, literature, and the Gallery,—with the inexhaustible store of delight it contains,—not to mention all the private collections of paintings. Like most of the continental towns,

however, the streets seemed to me narrow and gloomy; but they are on the whole more cheerful, and certainly far cleaner than ordinary. They are paved with flat irregular-shaped flag-stones, delightful for driving upon; but they have the usual inconvenient want of a trottoir or footway, and consequently the same feeling of insecurity attends one's progress through them on foot.

By far the most enviable place of residence I saw was the Lung' Arno, where a succession of palaces border either side of the river, and are connected by four bridges, among which the three graceful elliptical marble arches of the Ponte de Santissima Trinita, and the picturesque covered passage of the Ponte Vecchio, or Ponte de 'Orefici,—as it is sometime called, from being crowded with old-fashioned, odd-looking, little jewellers' shops,—the most powerfully attract one's attention.

Florence, which only rose to importance in modern times, boasts no remains of former days. Not a single fallen column, or mouldering temple, arrests our steps; but, though destitute of antiquities, it abounds in the treasures of the fine arts. The Piazza de' Gran' Duca,—besides the equestrian statue in bronze of Cosmo, the first Duke, by John of Bologna, from which it derives its name,—is ornamented with the Rape of the Sabines, a fine groupe in marble by the same artist; Judith in the act of murdering Holofernes, by Donatello; David triumphant over Goliah, by Michael Angelo; Hercules killing Cacus, by Bandinello; and a bronze

statue of Perseus with the head of Medusa, by Benvenuto Cellini, the "mad goldsmith," of notorious memory.

The sight of bronze and marble statues, the masterpieces of modern sculpture, adorning the streets and public fountains, exposed to the weather, and courting the public eye, made us feel that Florence was indeed "the Athens of Italy," the cradle of the fine arts, and the place of their regeneration, as Athens was of their birth. It was here that the sister arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, like the Graces, started at once into life, and, entwined in each others arms, grew from infancy to maturity. It was here, after the slumber of ages, that divine Poetry first reappeared upon earth,—touched the soul of Dante with that inspiration which created a language harmonized by Heaven, and revealed to him, in sublime visions of hell, the horrors of the world to come, and to our own Milton, in glimpses of Paradise, the beauty of that which was lost. It was here that infant Science, beneath the fostering care of Galileo, disclosed her light to man; and here Taste, Genius, Literature, and the Arts which have humanized the world, flourished beneath the reign of Freedom: but with Freedom they fled for ever. This is no vain figure of speech, or dream of fancy. The history of all the Italian states, and perhaps of almost every other country, gives proof of this truth. If we look back to ancient times, in Athens it was in the most glorious era of her republic,—in Etruria, it was while her states existed free and independent, and

were governed by their own chosen delegates,—and in Rome, it was during the Augustan age, while yet she had known no tyrant, and the last lingering sparks of Roman freedom were unexpired—that literature and the fine arts reached their proudest pre-eminence. In modern times, it was in the republics of Florence, Pisa, Sienna, Bologne, Venice, and Genoa, that they sprung forth the companions of Freedom; and it is far more than poetically true, that they have ever followed in her train. With her they appeared upon the ungenial soil of Flanders and Holland; and with her "they sought" her last, and at present, her sole abode—England. It is true, indeed, that the disadvantages of climate, of isolated situation, and seclusion from the great models of art, together with other physical causes, have operated to check our country in attaining full perfection in some of the arts which are peculiarly dependent upon climate, and its concomitants; though, in despite of every obstacle, I believe every competent judge will allow, that the architects and painters of England, in the reign of George the Third, have far surpassed their contemporaries in every other country; and that her sculptors are only excelled by the Canova and Thorwaldson of Rome.*

* I might enumerate a long and brilliant list of names that are, and will be, the boast of our country in the fine arts; but I will only name a few of the living and the dead, whose genius has given new lustre to the longest and most glorious reign that our country, or, I might add, any other country, can boast—Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, Mr Starke,

But in all the great and useful arts that minister to the improvement of society and the power of man, in every branch of science and literature, in poetry and eloquence, in the noblest of the fine arts themselves, and in all that is the best proof of their influence, is not England at this moment confessedly unrivalled? And without freedom, would she ever have been their seat? Have they ever visited any land, however congenial in climate or situation, which has not been blessed with freedom? Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and the whole void extent of the eastern world, where unbounded wealth was lavished in gorgeous magnificence, undirected by taste, unbrightened by genius, and undignified by knowledge, are striking exemplifications of this truth; and we may observe, that Naples and Sicily, though on the same soil, and beneath the same sun, that produced, in the modern Republics of Italy, a degree of excellence in science, literature, poetry, painting, and sculpture, that almost surpassed her ancient greatness, as they have known no gleam of liberty, have seen no school of art or literature. Modern Rome, which never hailed the reign of freedom, has produced no celebrated poets, philosophers, or artists. It has been well observed, that almost all the great names which she can boast, both in past and present

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and the present Mr W. Playfair, of Edinburgh, in architecture; Sir Joshua Reynolds, Hogarth, West, Wilkie, Allan, Wilson, Williams of Edinburgh, and Turner, in painting; and Flaxman and Chantry, in sculpture.

times, have been transplanted thither from other states.

I will not stop to enquire whether commerce, wealth, and prosperity, which are the inseparable attendants of freedom, may not at least equally contribute to foster the arts. It is sufficient that freedom is the primary cause of all. The fine arts may, therefore, with truth, be called the daughters of freedom. Some of them, indeed, have been enslaved. Music, "heavenly maid!" corrupted from those youthful days "when first in early Greece she sung;" and Dancing, if indeed the nymph be of legitimate birth, have enlisted themselves in the service of Despotism; and Architecture, we know, has been the slave of princes. But those nobler arts, which demand the higher energies of mind, and the force of original genius, can live only in the atmosphere of freedom. It would not perhaps be difficult to trace the cause of this, and to shew that, beneath her influence, the mind becomes more active and vigorous, learns to trust to its own powers, and to exert them with more energy and success. But I know you are laughing at me all this time for laying down grave truths to you with so much wisdom and self-complacency. At the same time, let me tell you that they *are* truths, however you may laugh, and, however little dignified by years or knowledge may be the person by whom they are propounded; they are truths, moreover, that would lead to a thousand others equally just and evident; and, therefore, for my own sake as much as yours,

I shall forego any further discussion of them at present, especially as I am very sleepy, which may possibly be your case also.

LETTER II.

FROM the Tower of the Palazzo vecchio, this morning, we gave a farewell look to the white villas, gay gardens, and hanging vineyards, that cover the beautiful slope of Fiesole, gracefully rising immediately from the city.

We gazed with no common interest at the Convent on its utmost summit, where our own Milton spent many weeks in retirement, and where he loved to meditate, amidst the Etruscan ruins of its ancient city,

"At evening, on the top of Fiesole."

The long range of the snowy Appenines rose behind it, the glittering points of which seemed to pierce the bright blue sky; and the eye, pursuing in imagination the upward course of the Arno through the wanderings of its beautiful vale, seemed to penetrate into the deep secluded recesses of Vallombrosa, amidst whose ancient woods, and haunted stream, the muse once visited Milton in dreams of Paradise. The deep wintry snows of the Appenines at present barred all approach to

the now-deserted Convent, and we lamented that we were too late to see the autumnal beauty of "the falling leaf in Vallombrosa." No spot of his native land recalls our greatest poet so strongly to mind as the scenes in the vicinity of Florence, which he has consecrated in immortal verse; and the remembrance that Milton, in the days of his youthful enthusiasm, while yet the fair face of Nature was open to his undarkened eye, had wandered in these delightful vales, felt all their enchantment, and drank inspiration from their beauty, gave them redoubled charms to our eyes. Short as was my visit to the banks of the Arno, I shall remember it with feelings of delight, even if it be my lot to see them no more. But we left Florence with the hope, that when the voice of Spring wakes again in the vallies, and the sunshine of Summer restores them to fertility and beauty, we shall revisit the shades of Tuscany.

It was difficult to remember that December was far advanced, as, beneath the brilliant beams of an Italian sun, we pursued our journey to Siena. The hedges on either side were covered with the luxuriant laurustinus, just bursting into full bloom, the creeping clematis, and the dark-green foliage of the sweet-scented bay.

The pale saddened hue of the olive, in full leaf, and covered with its blackening fruit, contrasted well with the deep rich tints of the majestic oak-trees, whose foliage, though brown and withered, still clung to their ancient ivy-covered branches,

and shed the lingering beauties of autumn over the stern features of winter.

After all, vineyards and olive groves may make a better figure on paper or in poetry; but in reality, no tree is comparable in beauty to the oak. Its ramifications are so fine, its form so gigantic, its character so grand and venerable! To us, indeed, it has a beauty greater even than these—for it recalls to us, in every distant land, the image of our native country. And of it we cannot think without a sensation of pride as well as pleasure; for however blest others may be in natural advantages and riches, how comparatively wretched is the condition of man in all! The North of Italy, however, presents a most favourable contrast, in all respects, to the South of France, which we have so lately quitted; and never was it my lot to traverse so dull and uninteresting a country.

In that land of romance and fable, neither fields nor forest trees, nor houses nor enclosures, nor men nor beasts, meet the view; but a white arid soil is covered with stunted olives that might be mistaken for pollard willows; and with vineyards so dwarfish and so cut-short, that currant bushes might disdain a comparison with them.

The slovenly neglected appearance of the country—the total want of wood, of corn, and of pasture, of animals and even of birds; its general desertion both by the proprietor and the peasant, and the absence of all marks of life, and of human habitation, have a most melancholy effect, and ac-

cord but too well with the heartless and discontented appearance of the people, who herd together in villages composed of long narrow streets of miserable hovels, the filth and wretchedness of which I shall never forget. Not a single neat cottage by the way-side or rural hamlet, or snug farm-house, is to be seen; even the chateau is rare, and when it appears, it is in a state of dilapidation and decay, and the very abode of gloom; not surrounded with pleasure-grounds, or woods, or parks, or gardens, but with a filthy village appended to its formal court-yard. How often did the cheerful cottages, and happy country-seats of our smiling country, recur to my mind, as I journeyed through the be-praised, but dreary scenes of Languedoc and Provence! It was during the season of the vintage, too, and I can truly say, I saw no signs of mirth or festivity; a Scotch *shearing* is an infinitely more jocund concern.

In Italy, on the contrary, though the middle of winter, every thing looks comparatively gay. The peasants live in their little farms, and their scattered cottages cover the face of the country, presenting the pleasing images of rural life and agricultural labour. The olive trees are of loftier size, and more luxuriant growth, than in France; and their pale hue is beautifully contrasted here with the dark spiral form of the columbar cypress, and the brown foliage of the aged oak. The fields are enclosed with rows of poplars, connected by intermingling garlands of vines, twined from tree to tree, and hanging from the branches in such gay festoons,

that they look as if the whole country had been dressed out for some festive occasion.

This mode of managing the vines, however, though infinitely more beautiful and more poetical, as well as picturesque, renders the wine made from them of far inferior quality to that produced by the scrubby little vineyards of France; and this is the case wherever the practice is pursued. A curious exemplification of this occurs in Madeira. On the north side of the island, where the vine is still "married to the elm," and taught to cling to it in gay clusters, the wine is of a thin, poor, sour quality; but on the other parts of the island, the vineyards that produce its staple wine are trained about four feet from the ground, on low sloping trellises, which cover the steep side of the hills; and I have observed that the same plan is pursued in many parts of the Tyrol, where the wine is remarkably good.

The scenery through which we passed in our journey to-day was singularly beautiful. Sometimes winding round the sides of the hills, we looked down into peaceful vallies among the mountains, in whose sheltered bosom lay scattered cottages, shaded with olive-trees, and surrounded with fields of the richest fertility. Our road lay a long time through a narrow but beautiful vale, and by the side of a clear rippling stream, half hid by wood, the name of which our stupid vetturino could not tell us. We passed through the little towns of San Casciano and Tavernella,—how much happier looking than the dirty, neglected, and ruinous villages

of the South of France! The North is certainly far superior, and Normandy is infinitely prettier than Provence; but throughout, France is the most unpicturesque country in Europe. It is, indeed, every where bounded by beauty. The Alps, the Pyrenees, the Estrelle mountains,* and the Jura, contain within their recesses some of the sublimest scenery in the world. But the country these grand boundaries enclose, is remarkably devoid of beauty and interest; it is a dull picture set in a magnificent frame.

But I am carrying you, "like a crab, backwards," into France, forgetting that I ought to be getting you on in Italy, and more especially on the road between Florence and Siena, on which we advanced in the most leisurely manner; for, during this entire day, never did we vetiture upon any pace approaching to a trot. Wretched, indeed, is the fate of those who, like us, travel vetturino! In an evil hour were we persuaded to engage at Florence the trio of mules, and the man, or vetturino, by whose united efforts we are to be dragged along, day by day, at a pace not at all exceeding in velocity that of an English waggon, stopping, for the convenience of these animals, two hours at noon, in some filthy hole, no better than an English pig-stye, getting up in the morning, or rather in the middle of the night, about four hours before day-break; and when, by our labours, we have achieved a distance, often of thirty miles, we are put up

* On the road between Antibes and Nice.

for the night in whatever wretched osteria our evil destiny may have conducted us to.

This is the regular process, and after being operated upon in this manner for six days, we are to arrive at Rome, a journey of about 150 English miles. It is an admirable exemplification of the wonderful effects of patience and perseverance; for our progress is so nearly imperceptible, that no one, *a priori*, seeing the rate at which we move, could conjecture we should ever get there at all. We did not set out till about eleven this morning, having only half a day's journey to perform, and yet long before we reached our destination, we beheld the magnificent spectacle of the sun setting in a flood of glory; while the beautiful star of evening lighted her lamp in the western sky, and the full glowing moon rose majestically behind the Appenines, to light us on our way through the vales of Tuscany.

Without any romance, I do assure you the moon does look larger, and shines with far more warmth and brilliancy, in the sky of Italy, than amidst the fogs and vapours of England; a thing by no means unreasonable or unaccountable.

In an early part of our pilgrimage, we passed some convents, whose grey walls, half-concealed by the deep shade of the columbar cypress and spreading pine, are still the habitation of the secluded monk; rich and luxurious no longer. The vast endowments and possessions of the cloister are every where gone, and its votaries are now abandoned to poverty (not voluntary) and neglect. Not

far from Florence, in a commanding eminence, stands the Certosa, (Chartreuse) or Convent of Carthusians, where the late unfortunate Pontiff, Pius VI., first found a retreat in his exile, and from whence he was forcibly, and almost ignominiously dragged, at the age of eighty, to perish in a foreign jail.

It is singular, that the representative of St Peter has received from the Catholic French only insult and outrage, and from the Protestant English, respect and protection.

About six miles from Florence we passed the Church and Convent of St Maria dell' Impruneta, which, while its pecuniary wealth has passed away, still retains, what no doubt its reverend fathers esteem a far more valuable treasure, a miraculous image of the Virgin, found many ages ago buried under ground, on the very spot where the church, built in her honour, now stands. More than a century ago, the history of the miracles she had wrought filled a huge quarto volume; and, as I am credibly informed, she has gone on working them unceasingly ever since, I wonder what number of quartos would contain the list now? I was assured by the vetturino, that whenever any body asked any thing of her, she did it for them directly; and he gave me some most marvellous details of her performances.

She is transported to Florence in great state, and met by the priests and magistrates, nay, often by the Grand Duke in person, and carried in procession through the streets, whenever there is any

public blessing to be procured, or any public calamity to be averted; when, for example, rain is wanted, or an inundation dreaded; and she generally rests, after her fatigues, for some days in the Cathedral, before she sets out on her journey back to this her fixed abode.

She is thought to be a surer defence against an enemy than either generals or armies, and cures diseases better than any doctor; nay, she actually delivered the city from the last pestilence, about 200 years ago; so that her claims to be at the head of the faculty are incontestible. I was curious to know the particulars of the original discovery of such an invaluable Madonna, and learnt, that discontented at her long confinement under ground, which was indeed a most natural feeling, she took the opportunity, when some peasants were digging above her head, to make her situation known by loud cries. More, I make no doubt, I might have heard, but an unlucky fit of laughter, which seized me at this part of the narration, so shocked the piety of our vetturino, that he actually crossed himself, and leaving the rest of her edifying story untold, he returned to his mules, by the side of which he walks three-fourths of the way.

We arrived late at the little inn of Poggibonzi, where we are to sleep, and which is by no means uncomfortable for a country inn in Italy. To be sure it smokes so incessantly, that we are compelled to sit with open windows, though the air is extremely cold; but this is no uncommon occurrence. The house is tolerably clean, and the

room I am writing in is very tastefully ornamented with some elegant angels painted in fresco, the beauties of which must beguile the time, whilst we are waiting for the repast, which it is the vetturino's care to furnish. This plan of being fed like the mules by him, may perhaps surprise you; but it is customary with those who adopt this agreeable mode of travelling, and it has the advantage of saving one from the alternative of gross imposition, or incessant wrangling at all the osterias, as well as of sometimes getting one a dinner by the vetturino's interest, where otherwise none would be to be had; for the publicans in Italy calculate well on the best subjects for cheating, and generally select unlucky *forestieri* like us, whom they never expect to see again; whereas they are very assiduous to please the vetturini, who are their constant customers, and are a numerous, and, in their line, an important body in Italy. Our vetturino has promised us an excellent dinner, or, as he calls it, supper; for the lower orders of Italians still seem to preserve the classical custom of making their principal meal in the evening, about seven o'clock. I cannot but think that this plan, pursued by the higher order of English, the vetturinos and the old Romans, is a very sensible one, as it allows time for the active business or pursuits of the day to be over before assembling at the social board. But here it comes! "Eccola," says the Cameriere, placing on the table the *minestra*, or soup, in a huge tureen, containing plenty of hot water, with some half-boiled macaroni in it. If

you don't like this kind of soup, you may have bread boiled in water; it is all the same. There is always a plate of grated parmesan cheese, to mix with the minestra of whatever sort it may be, without which even Italian palates could never tolerate such a potion. This is generally followed by a *frittura*, which consists of liver, brains, or something of that sort, fried in oil. Then comes the *'rosto*, which to-day appears in the shape of half of a starved turkey, attended by some other undescribable dish, smelling strong of garlic.

Would you like to dine with us? But I cannot wait for your answer, being hungry. So good night.

LETTER III.

EXACTLY at five o'clock we left the village of Poggibonzi, and commenced our pilgrimage by the cold pale moon-light of morning, which shone brightly on the white frosty earth, but no longer shed the same glowing beam that had lighted our evening journey. The air was intensely cold, and though the sun rose at last with splendour in the clear blue sky, it was only beneath his noon-tide rays that the frozen ground, or our still more frozen persons, yielded to his genial influence.

Siena stands on the top of an ugly hill, unsheltered by a single tree from the blasts of winter, and equally unshaded from the heats of summer, at the very verge of the fertile region of Tuscany, and bordering upon a sterile and desolate tract which extends many miles to the southward. I cannot give you any adequate idea of the utter nakedness of this singular waste, which is so completely destitute of all kinds of vegetation, that not a weed, nor a single blade of grass, nor heath, nor lichen, meets the eye over its whole extent, while its bare and broken surface is heaved up into small abrupt mounds or hillocks, of pale arid hue, which have

every appearance of having been formed in some crisis of volcanic eruption. Indeed, the whole country is composed of nothing but the matter, or the refuse, of this terrific agent. Strange! that when for more than three thousand years, at least, we know that these flames have been quenched—when even tradition preserves no trace of their existence,—their effects should still be so visible to the eye, even of the most inadvertent traveller!

The tufo, which I now saw for the first time, and of which almost all the low hills about Siena are composed, is so soft as to break and crumble in the hand like friable sand-stone. It is of a grey colour, and frequently of an aggregate formation, and is supposed to be composed of the ashes, mixed with the boiling water and mud, which are thrown out in immense quantity in all volcanic eruptions. But all this scene of desolation is on the south side of Siena. I forget that we are still on the north, and that I must get you through it—no easy matter; for the hills are so many and so steep, and the streets are so slippery and so narrow, that they seem never to have been intended for the ordinary purposes of passage, and, in fact, there is a considerable part of the town into which no carriage can penetrate.

The pavement is generally of brick, placed angularly; it seems to be exactly the *opus spicatum* of the ancients, so called from its resemblance to the way the grains are set in an ear of wheat.*

* Winkelman sur l'Architecture, Chap. i. — 62.

The city has an antiquated appearance; its streets, or rather lanes, are lined with high gloomy old-fashioned houses, looking like jails, and called, or rather miscalled, palaces, which have fallen into decay like their possessors, who are too proud to resign, and too poor to inhabit them.

Many of them are furnished with high towers for defence. It is curious to see fortified dwelling-houses in the midst of cities. That "every man's house is his castle," seems to be true in a very different sense in Italy from what it is in England. Here, indeed, they were calculated to stand a siege, and are monuments of that age of feudal strife in which the proud Barons waged continual war with each other, and the sword never rested in its scabbard. They are common at Pisa, Bologna, Florence, and every city which was once a republic. The sight of the Wolf and the Twins, erected in various conspicuous situations, carried us back from these barbarous republics to the glorious republic of Rome, from which Siena claims descent. But I will spare you a dissertation on its history, as I have not made any new discoveries therein, and see no reason why I should repeat the old ones, which are detailed in a thousand books, in which you may find a full and authentic account of its Etruscan origin,—of the Roman colony which, in the days of Augustus, peopled *Sena Julia*—of its rise as a modern republic, of its revolutions, its inveterate animosities, its bloody wars, its prosperity, its decline, and its fall. Times are changed since 100,000 armed citizens marched out of its gates;

for through the whole of its deserted extent, scarcely 12,000 inhabitants can now be numbered.

It still retains its boasted superiority in language over every other city of Italy. But we were so unlucky as scarcely to hear it; the cameriere at the inn having, in an evil hour, acquired a small smattering of French, could not be induced to utter any thing else, and the old toothless lacquey who conducted us through the town, from some natural defect in articulation, could speak no language intelligibly. The customary whine of the beggars, the most frequent sound in all Italian towns, seemed to our transalpine ears not more than usually melodious; and the little we conversed with others, was sufficient to convince us that if Siena boasts in the highest perfection the true Tuscan dialect, it is also infected with the true Tuscan pronunciation, in which the delightful harmony of the language is wholly lost; and though somewhat softened from the twang of Florence, still, every initial C and G, even here, are pronounced like an H, and the strong aspirations and harsh guttural sounds are extremely offensive to the ear.

The Duomo or Cathedral, is one of the largest, heaviest, and most magnificent churches of Italy. The tower of the *campanile*, or belfry, is here attached to the building; but the whole, like Florence, is built of alternate layers of black and white marble; like Florence too, it is a work of the thirteenth century, and of that architecture which they have the impudence here to call Gothic, though it might with far more propriety be deno-

minated barbarous. It stands on an elevated platform of white marble, to which you ascend by a flight of steps running along the whole breadth of its front, and enter by three principal doors. Few will stop to criticise a pile of such greatness and magnificence, adorned with such labour, and formed of such costly materials. But it is to these *too* splendid materials, that alternation of colour, and that overpowering profusion of ornament, that I object. Marble sounds more magnificently, but stone, in my humble opinion, is infinitely better adapted for exterior building; it looks nearly as well even at first, sustains far less injury from time and exposure to weather, and when marble would be stained, moss-covered, and decayed by age, it preserves a smooth, solid, and unspotted surface; but whatever may be thought on this head, the mixture of contrasting colours either in marble, or any other kind of buildings, must ever be offensive to the eye of taste. Only conceive what would be the effect of Westminster Abbey or York Minster, covered from top to bottom with black and white stripes.—Yet such are the cathedrals of Florence and Siena. Equally remote from the venerable majesty of the Gothic aisle, or the lengthening beauty of the Grecian colonnade, here, round, heavy Gothic arches rest their unmerciful weight on deformed Grecian pillars, and a load of ornament frittered away into little mean details, over-every part of the edifice, perplexing the wearied eye with its useless intricacies.

The slender supporting columns of the huge

massive door-ways rest on the backs of crouching lions; a barbarism we observed through the whole of the Milanese, and which, I believe, is of Lombard origin.

In the interior, nothing meets the eye but the pomp of marble magnificence. Above your head, the lofty dome, and azure vault, studded with golden stars, represent the glories of the firmament; and beneath your feet is spread a pavement which was the work of ages, for four centuries passed away before it was completed.

Solely by means of a dark-grey marble, inlaid upon a white ground, is represented, with all the force of painting, various events of sacred history, of which the Sacrifice of Isaac struck me with the highest admiration, though I believe Moses striking the Rock is generally the most esteemed. The figure of Abraham grasping his knife, is one which will not easily pass away from the memory. It was designed by Beccafiume, (detto il Meccarino) a Sienese painter of the fifteenth century, with great spirit and truth; and the ease of the flowing outline, the dignity of the head, and the force of expression, make it rather seem a fine design drawn on marble, than formed of such intractable materials.

After having been worn by the unceasing tread of feet upwards of a century, this wonderful pavement has at last been covered with a moveable wooden flooring, which is raised to shew you its several parts or pictures.

The eye is bewildered with the varieties of splen-

dour that attract it in every direction, and wanders from Papal busts to Grecian statues; from the magnificent marble pulpit, richly adorned with basso relievo, and its beautiful stair-case, to the splendid dirty baptistery, and the Ghigi Chapel, on which piety has heaped more magnificence than taste would perhaps have directed.

It is adorned with a copy in Mosaic, executed at Rome, of a picture of Carlo Maratti's, so admirably done, that I could scarcely believe it was mosaic, and not painting. It is wonderful with what fidelity, both in design and colouring, a mere mechanic art can give back the copy in stone, of the masterpiece of the pencil. The most delicate touches are imitated.

In the niches of the chapel stand two celebrated statues by Bernini—St Jerome, and a Magdalen. The former is the best; but the affectation of attitude, the distortion of limb and feature, the overcharged expression, the want of nature and simplicity, which are the irredeemable faults of his style, are still but too apparent, even in these much-extolled performances.

We stopped at the door of the library adjoining the church, to examine a beautiful Pagan altar of Parian marble, adorned with rams' heads and wreaths of flowers, found in digging the foundations of the cathedral, and converted into the pedestal of one of the pillars of the door-way.

At the same time and place, was dug up a mutilated groupe of the Graces, universally allowed to be the finest representation of them in the world.

They are placed in the library, to the greatest possible disadvantage; so injudiciously elevated, that the smallness of their stature (for they are considerably below the human size) makes them appear contemptible, and so lost in the glare of the large solitary window, that the eye can with difficulty trace the perfect symmetry of their forms. From these circumstances, from their dirty discoloration, and their mutilated state, (one head, and various arms and legs being wanting) it is not till after some examination that their excellence becomes apparent. My first sensation was disappointment, my last delighted admiration; and it was with difficulty I tore myself from gazing on their faultless beauty. The air of easy and unstudied grace, the unrestrained simplicity of attitude, the chaste design, the freedom of nature, and beauty of expression, proclaim this admirable groupe to be one of the purest models of Grecian sculpture.

When Raphael was only sixteen years old, he came to Siena to assist Pinturicchio, (another and a senior pupil of his master, Pietro Perugino,) to paint the walls of this library in fresco; and as he generally gets the whole credit, or discredit, of every work his pencil ever touched, we were assured they were his work. The fact is, that the designs were his, and there is no doubt that one compartment, that on the left side of the room on entering, and nearest the window, in which his own portrait is introduced as a youth on horseback, was executed by his own hand.

But he was sent for to Rome when the painting of this library had made but little progress;* and there is no reason to believe that he ever painted any more of it. This is believed to be his earliest existing work, and it is therefore valuable, for it is certainly interesting to trace the progress of genius from its first faint essays to its latest perfection; but I will not attempt to conceal from you that these hard, rigid, upright figures, struck me as about the most hideous old things I had ever beheld in painting; but for the name of Raphael, I should never have looked at them twice; and long and vainly did I look, in the hope of finding out their excellence. The inspection of them, indeed, raised my admiration of Raphael higher than ever, not from their beauties, but their excessive ugliness. That the same hand that feebly sketched these straight, stiff, Gothic figures, should ever have pourtrayed the sublime form of St John in the Desert, the angelic beauty of the Madonna della Sedia,† or the faultless perfection of the Martyrdom of St Stephen,‡ was indeed a proud triumph to genius.

Sixteen years had not elapsed between the execution of these two widely different works, the ex-

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* Lanzi. Storia Pittorica.

† In the Palazzo Pitti at Florence; the only picture I had then seen in that invaluable collection.

‡ At Genoa, in the Church of S. Stefano. It is worth while to go there, were it only to see this picture. It is partly painted by Giulio Romano, but designed by Raphael.

tremgs of good and ill. What a transition! What a space passed over! He had not only to teach himself the very rudiments of design and first principles of composition, but he had to unlearn—a far more difficult task—all the dry Gothic manner—all the meanness and littleness that he had acquired from Pietro Perugino—faults glaringly apparent in these figures. Sir Joshua Reynolds felt humbled on examining his early portraits, to see that he had so little improved upon them; but Raphael might have looked at his with pride, to behold his almost immeasurable progress. From what he had already achieved, we may conjecture what he might have done, had not death cut him off before his early spring of genius had reached maturity, at the age of thirty-seven. We visited the Accademia de' Belli Arti, filled with the productions of Sienese artists. Out of Siena you see little, and hear less of the Sienese school; in it, you see and hear of nothing else. "Lieto scuola fra' lieto popolo," was the character given to this school of painting by one of its most discerning critics.—Gay in colouring, free in design, allegorical, fanciful, but not deep.

Its pretensions to antiquity reach even higher than those of Florence, and in that alone it surpasses the other schools of Italy. It is the oldest and the poorest, the least learned, the least scientific, and the least distinguished of them all. In a long course of centuries, it has never produced a single artist whose name has been heard of beyond the Alps, except by the small tribe of virtuosi, with

whom names, indeed, are the most important part of knowledge. The fame of Raphael, Titian, Domenichino, Guido, the Caracci, Corregio, the Poussins, Claude Lorraine, and Salvator Rosa, has filled the world, and been revered by thousands who have never beheld their works. But who ever heard of Casolani, or Vanni, or Meccarino, or Beccafiume, or even Peruzzi?

Guido da Siena, the earliest of them all, flourished in 1220, while Cimabue was yet unborn. His paintings, then highly celebrated, still exist in the Accademia de' Belli Arti, in this city, where stiff black figures of forgotten saints, and grim old Madonnas, extended on gilt grounds, seem made in scrupulous conformity to the Tenth Commandment; for they are not "the likeness of any thing in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth." Yet the praise of Guido of Siena was sung by the first poets of his day; and his pupils vainly emulated his works. The Sienese pretend that their Guido was the reviver of painting; but that the art, or such rude attempts at it as these, was ever wholly extinct, I see no reason to believe. In the most barbarous times, hideous representations, or rather misrepresentations, of men, and animals, and landscapes, were probably made; nay, dubious and forgotten names of the painters of such works have been industriously grubbed out of the dust of antiquity, by laborious compilers of long disquisitions, that nobody but themselves will read; but, as far back as our eye can penetrate into the darkness of the

middle ages, in whose obscure annals the history of the fine arts had no place, we find that Greek artists (then the only ones) adorned the churches with the images of their Madonnas, some of which are still to be seen in different parts of Italy.

The manner of these Greek artists was preserved, and but little improved upon, by Guido da Siena, Giunto of Pisa, and their contemporaries. In these days, painting was the art of deformity. Even the works of Cimabue of Florence, who was called the father of painting, and considered a prodigy in his day, are only examinable as illustrating the history of the art; yet he was unquestionably the first, worthy of the name of a painter—the first who struck out the right path, and dared to study and to copy nature. He even attempted to give some degree of life and animation to the face, and somewhat less of strait, stretched out, rectilinear wretchedness to the figure. He was so far surpassed by his pupil Giotto, that it was confidently asserted by Petrarch, who was his friend, and whose portrait he painted,—that the art of painting had attained its utmost perfection, and could go no further! His epitaph in the Cathedral of Florence, boasts that nothing was wanting to his powers, but that which was wanting to nature herself.

Giotto, the subject of this eulogium, was bred a shepherd, but born a painter. The son of a poor Tuscan peasant, with neither example to fire, nor instruction to direct, he amused himself from childhood, while tending his flock, with drawing on the green sod, or the cottage wall, every object that

struck his fancy. A sheep, which he had rudely sketched on a flag, caught the eye of Cimabue, who was accidentally passing that way; he begged the shepherd boy from his parents, educated and instructed him, and thus formed in his scholar, the future master, that was destined to eclipse his fame.

Like Michael Angelo, Raphael, and most of the early painters, Giotto was a sculptor and architect, as well as a painter. His principal architectural work was the belfry of Florence Cathedral.

But to return to the Siena school, from which I have wandered, and in the history of which I believe I got no farther than old Guido de Siena. Passing over a long list of names, deservedly unknown to fame, I will only stop at one, and at that one, because he was, like Giotto, the friend of Petrarch. *Simone Memmi*, early in the fourteenth century, embellished with miniature paintings a Virgil in Petrarch's own hand-writing, and enriched by many of his original notes, which I saw in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. In the frontispiece, is a miniature painting of Virgil, writing, with his head thrown upwards, as if invoking the Muse. The Æneid is personified by a figure of Æneas in armour—the Bucolica, by a shepherd—and the Georgics, by a peasant employed in rural labour. It is interesting, not only as an illustration of the history of painting, but as a specimen of the taste of the poet, who directed the designs himself. The colours are splendidly rich, like those of all illuminated manuscripts, but the drawing is poor and mean.

In the church of San Quirico in Siena, I was much pleased with the Flight into Egypt, by Vanni. The expression in the face of the Child is perfectly divine, and in the head of the Virgin there is much of the grace of Corregio; indeed, through the whole piece I fancied I could trace an imitation of that great artist's style; his easy, flowing, but somewhat incorrect design; his grace and sweetness of expression, that sometimes almost border on the verge of affectation—but it wants the charm and the fascination of his exquisite works—the colouring is poor and false,—there is no breadth—no greatness of effect,—and the hand of the Virgin is so awkwardly twisted, and so ill drawn, that it grievously offends one's eye. It is a good second-rate picture, and there is nothing in Siena which can be ranked higher.

In the same church, and by the same artist, is a Deposition from the Cross, in which the grief of the Virgin is deep, and finely given.

But by far the best picture we saw here was the Sybil prophesying the birth of our Saviour to Augustus. It is finely conceived, and marked by great force and originality of genius and expression. It is the work of Balthasar Peruzzi, who lived early in the sixteenth century, and ranks as the first master of the Sienese school.

Misfortunes pursued him through life: born in poverty and meanness, and too modest to contend with proud presuming rivals, he struggled long in obscurity and wretchedness, till, in the sack of Rome by the soldiers of Charles V. he lost all that

his labour had amassed, and died in extreme misery, leaving his wife and six children to beggary, and his memory loaded with the suspicion that despair had driven him to shorten his days by poison.

The present school of painting at Siena does not promise to surpass the former. In the Accademia de' Belli Arti, we saw some of the works of the professor and the students, which were too bad for criticism.

A beautiful little Torso of a Youth, and a mutilated Victory, caught my attention as we were leaving the Accademia. The perfect grace, the purity of style, and exquisite taste displayed in both these fragments; the harmonious beauty of form in the Torso, and the fine flow of the drapery in the Victory, prove them to have been first-rate pieces of sculpture. They are of Grecian marble, (like the Graces in the Cathedral,) and were also found at Siena.

We next went to a palace, called, I think, Saraconi, and walked through a long suite of cold, empty, poverty-struck rooms, filled with a great number of bad paintings, not one of which was worth looking at; and we saw a very dirty Marchesa, whom I took for a maid servant, and was on the point of giving her some money—for she only made her appearance as we were going away—when our old lacquey luckily prevented me, by announcing her rank. She had in her hand an earthen pot full of hot wood-ashes, which the Italian women of all ranks use instead of a fire, and

carry with them wherever they go, both in-doors and abroad. They call it their *marito*,* and it is indeed that marito to which they are the most constant. We had a narrow escape, however, from the Marchesa's other marito—I mean the live one, the Marchese himself—who interrupted us on the stairs, and was bent upon making us return to listen to his compliments, and admire his paintings, for which we had neither time nor inclination.

We passed through a pleasant promenade, where the sun was shining bright, and some Sienese belles were slowly sauntering along, attended by their cavalieri serventi, and all attired in the same costume, black hats and feathers, and red shawls. Round the circle for carriages a youth was driving his calêche, or caratella, sitting, not on the box, but *in* the carriage, holding the reins at arm's length before him, and drest something like a French caricature of an English jockey. He meant himself for an imitation of the things one used to see personating coachmen in Hyde-Park and Bond-street, but had not attained any resemblance to them. In short, he was quite a dandy of Siena, and he cracked his whip, and tried to make his horses prance (in harness,) and laboured hard for applause, particularly for ours; for seeing we were English ladies, and resolved to astonish our weak minds with a display of such Jehu genius so far from home, he pursued us wherever we went, full drive, up and down, through all the narrow streets,

* Husband.

and twice nearly run us over, in order to ensure our approbation.

Siena is a very dull place. Some English friends of ours who spent a winter there, found a great want of cultivated society. A few ancient, ill-educated noble families inhabit their hereditary mansions, but even these mix little with each other; it being the laudable custom for every lady to sit at home every evening to receive company, never making a visit to another. The gentlemen are divided among these rival queens, some of whom, I understand, are very charming women, and all are happy to receive respectable strangers of either sex;—but what is there in such societies to attract? There is no theatre, nor opera, nor public amusement of any kind. Life stagnates here; for its active pursuits, its interests, its honours, its pleasures, and its hopes, can have no place. No happy Briton can see and know what Siena is, without looking back with a swelling heart to his own country.

We paid a visit to the house of St Catherine of Siena, where is still to be seen—besides an ugly chapel painted in fresco—the stony couch on which the poor little saint used to sleep at nights, and the very identical spot where our Saviour stood when he espoused her, and put the wedding-ring on her finger! My astonishment was unutterable. I have seen the marriage of Christ and St Catherine a thousand times in painting, but I always concluded it to be metaphorical, or thought at most, that credulity had magnified some accidental dream into a vision sent by heaven; but it never once entered

into my head, that any human being had ever imagined, or pretended, that such a marriage really did take place. Yet here I was repeatedly and most solemnly assured by every body present,—consisting of a priest, a lacquey, a tailor, and two women—that our Saviour actually appeared on this spot in his own proper person, invested her with the ring, though how he came by it nobody knows, —for rings, I suppose, are not made in heaven, whatever marriages may be—and declared her his spouse, notwithstanding that he had been crucified several hundred years before this—his wife Catherine was born! Nay, they declared that he carried on a most affectionate correspondence with her, and that many of his letters of conjugal love are still extant. Of these, however, I could not obtain a sight, but I saw, in the public library in this city, several epistles on her side, to her dear husband Jesus Christ, and her mother-in-law the Virgin Mary.

That such a legend ever should have been accredited in the darkest ages of extravagant fanaticism, I could scarcely have believed; but that it should have been gravely repeated as authentic in the nineteenth century, nothing, I think, short of the evidence of my senses, could have convinced me.

Leaving the library, which contains a great quantity of books, though I would not answer for their value, we passed through the Piazza Pubblica, a singular place, shaped like a theatre, or rather like a fan, with its paved radii like fan-sticks converging together, and rivetted at the bottom by the

Palazzo Pubblico, a building answering to our town hall. What it contains I don't know, for we had no time to enter, the vetturino by this time becoming furious at our delay, and indeed night closed in upon us long before we reached our destined place of rest, the wretched osteria of the still more wretched village of Buon Convento. Thither, when a wearisome pilgrimage of four mortal hours had at last conducted us, its half-starved looking denizens would not admit us into the horrible pig-stye in which they wallowed themselves, but conducted us to a lone uninhabited house on the other side of the way, in which there was not a human being. We were ushered up an old ghastly staircase, along which the wind whistled mournfully, into an open hall, the raftered roof of which was overhung with cobwebs, and the stone floor was deep in filth. Four doors entered into this forlorn looking place, two of which led to the chill, dirty, miserable holes which were our destined places of repose; and the other two, to rooms that the people said did not belong to them; neither did they give any very distinct or satisfactory account of who might be their tenants,—one old woman assuring us they were inhabited by "Nessuno," * while the other maintained they were occupied by "Galant'uomini."† In the meantime, it was certain that the frail doors of our dormitories would yield on the slightest push; that the door of the hall itself leading upon the stairs had no fastening

* Nobody. † Very honest people.

at all; that the stairs were open to the road in front, and to the fields behind, the house itself having no door whatever; and thus, that whoever chose to pay us a nocturnal visit, might do so without the smallest inconvenience or difficulty to himself.

What was far worse, it was miserably cold; the wind blew about us, and we could get no fire. But there was no remedy for these grievances, and we resigned ourselves to fate and to bed. The two hideous old beldames who had brought us our wretched supper had left us for the night, and no human being was near us, when we heard the sound of a heavy foot on the creaking staircase, and a man wrapped in a cloak, and armed with a sword and musket, stalked into the hall.

If we had been heroines, what terrors might have agitated, and what adventures might not have befallen us! But as were not heroical, we neither screamed nor fainted, we only looked at him; and notwithstanding his formidable appearance, and that he had long black mustachios and bushy eyebrows, he did us no mischief, though he might have cut our throats with all the ease in the world: indeed he had still abundance of leisure for the exploit, for he informed us that he had the honour of lodging in the house, that he was the only person who had that honour, and that he should have the honour of sleeping in the next room to ours.

Finding him so courteous, and being aware there was no means of getting quit of him, we treated him on our parts with the utmost civility, perhaps upon the principle that the Indians worship the devil;

and exchanging the salutation of "Felicissima Notte!" (a wish which, however benevolent, there seemed small prospect of being granted,) our whiskered neighbour retreated into his apartment, the key of which he had in his pocket, and we contented ourselves with barricading our doors with the only table and chair that our desolate chambers contained; then in uncurtained and uncoverleted wretchedness, upon flock beds, the prey of innumerable fleas, and shaking with cold, if not with fear, we lay the live-long night; not even having wherewithal to cover us, for the potent smell of the filthy rug which performed the double duties of blanket and quilt, obliged us to discard it, and our carriage-cloaks were but an inadequate defence against the blasts that whistled through the manifold chinks of the room.

LETTER IV.

We got up, however, at four o'clock the next morning, unmurdered,—our friend of the musket and the sword, I make no doubt, being still fast in the arms of Morpheus; and we began in the dark to wend our weary way from this miserable osteria. First, we had a horse added to the three mules, and then a pair of oxen were yoked in front of all, and slowly toiling along, this combination of animals at last contrived to pull us up the long dreary barren hills, whose broken surface, strewed all over with huge masses of rock, were the only objects that met our view.

At ten o'clock we stopped at a solitary house on these wild wastes, called La Scala. It was the filthiest place I ever beheld, and the smell was so intolerable, that nothing but the excessive cold out of doors, could have induced us to have remained a single moment within it. Two hours, however, did we stay, cowering over the smoke of a wet wood fire, waiting till the mules were fed, for they

could get something to eat, but for us there was nothing; neither bread, coffee, eggs, milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, nor even macaroni, were to be had; so that we might have starved, or breakfasted upon salt fish fried in oil, had not our man, more provident than ourselves, produced a store of stale loaves and hard boiled eggs that he had laid in at Siena. We had observed a palace near the village of San Quirico, which we passed through this morning, and I learnt from the dirty squalid mistress of La Scala, between the acts of puffing the fire with her breath, that it belongs to the noble family of Chigi, but that they never live there now, and that San Quirico is inhabited only by poor people, "except indeed the canons of the church, who," she said, "were *ricchissimi*." On enquiring into the amount of this excess of wealth, it proved to be 300 crowns a-year! "Blush, Grandeur! blush!"

From La Scala we toiled up apparently interminable hills, till at last,—contrary to my expectations,—we reached the top of the wild and savage mountain of Radicofani. It was heaped with the tremendous ruins of nature. All around, huge blue fragments of basaltic rock were strewed so thickly, as in most places wholly to conceal the surface of the earth. When exposed to view between these heaps of shattered rock, it was quite bare, and looked as if from creation it had never borne one blade of grass. Dark barren hills of stone, rising all around us, met our eye in every

direction; it is impossible to conceive a more desolate scene. It seemed as if the beings that inhabited it must, of necessity, partake of its savage nature; and the aspect of those we saw well accorded with its character.

The country-men were all clothed in shaggy sheep-skins, with the wool outside, rudely stitched together to serve as a covering to their bodies; and pieces of the same were tied about their thighs, partially concealing the ragged vestments they wore beneath. Their legs and feet were bare; and this savage attire gave a strange, wild effect to the dark eyes that glared at us from beneath their bushy and matted locks. Indeed, their whole appearance reminded us literally of wolves in sheep's clothing.

The wintry blast howled around us in stormy gusts; but we braved its fury, though not without difficulty, in order to ascend to the town, or rather village, of Radicofoni, which is considerably higher up the mountain than the road, and wholly inaccessible to a carriage. High above the town, and impending directly over it, rises an abrupt rock of most singular appearance, which has its base on the very summit of the mountain, and on the utmost pinnacle of which stands the Castle, or Fort, of Radicofoni.

To this perilous-looking elevation, the violence of the wind rendered it wholly impossible for us to attain, and it was with great difficulty we clambered up to the wretched little town of Radicofoni;

which, after all, did not contain what we went to seek,—viz. casts from ancient medals and gems, which are made at the Baths of St Philip, a distance of five miles from hence, and therefore I concluded would be on sale here. No such thing! The Italians seem to neglect the most obvious means of making money honestly, but spare no trouble to get at it by begging or cheating. We were assailed with a crowd of stout, sturdy, clamorous beggars, any one of whom, if they had provided themselves with these casts to sell, might have made a considerable sum by us, and probably by most travellers. In England, there would have been abundance on sale, not only in the town, but at the inn.

The distance of the Baths of St Philip, the impracticability of the road for carriages, the shortness of the days, and the severity of the weather, prevented us from visiting this curious manufactory. I understood that the water of these springs, which holds a fine calcareous deposit, is artificially made to break into very fine spray, which falls on the models, and in time forms a perfect cast. The specimens I have seen are singularly beautiful.

In returning to the inn, we observed amongst the immense masses of rock which were heaped around on the mountain's side, some very striking basaltic columns; perhaps I ought rather to say, *roots* of columns, for I have never seen any elsewhere, and am ignorant if they present the same short, amputated appearance. None of them, I think, were so high as four feet, and they seldom

exceeded two. They reminded me much of stems of trees growing close together, and cut down. I did not measure their diameter, but it could scarcely be more than six inches.

Farther down, the young contadino, or peasant boy, who was our guide, (and whose sheep-skin clothing formed a curious contrast to his bare tawny legs and feet, of a deep red-brown, or copper colour) shewed us a large rock of blue compact basalt, which, when struck with a bit of stone, unites the sound of metal so exactly, that had not my eyes corrected the impression made on my ears, I should have believed it to have been a large bell struck by a hammer. Though immense numbers of masses of rock, similar in appearance, were strewed around, none of them possessed this property. The peasants all say this mountain was once a *Vesuvio*, which is, very naturally, throughout Italy, the generic name for a volcano, amongst the country people; and it is impossible to look on this scene of tremendous desolation, without sympathising in their belief, that it is the work of subterranean fire.

The Dogana of the Archduke, by the road-side, reminded us that we here quitted the frontiers of Tuscany, and entered the Estates of the Church; and a mile or two farther, at Ponte Centino, we stopped to give the officers of his Holiness the customary bribe of five pauls not to open our trunks. Indeed, throughout Italy, the Dogana, or Custom-house, operates as a direct tax upon travellers. I

have not yet met with one instance in which a bribe has been refused, though occasionally the officers are both insolent and oppressive. The creation of a Dogana not only in every state, but in every individual town of every state, is likewise extremely vexatious, both to travellers and residents, and a measure of most egregious absurdity on the part of the governments. Throughout Italy it is the same; no state lets itself be outdone in folly by its neighbour: and the continual examinations, the payment of petty fees, the delays and insolence of office, the wranglings, the "loss of time and hindrance of business," not only are the greatest possible annoyance to the luckless traveller, but are a complete check upon commerce.

After compounding, as usual, at the Dogana of his Holiness, we were allowed to proceed unmolested. It was dark, and no moon lighted us on our way through this desolate country. By the last fading light of evening, we saw ourselves alone on a wide extended waste, without a trace of man, or human habitation, or living thing. Here and there, indeed, a scanty bit of cultivation, unenclosed, and seemingly taken at random on the waste, showed, by its surface—impatiently scratched up rather than ploughed—that man had been there, though sullenly and in haste; but where he had come from, or whither he had gone, the mind vainly sought to penetrate. It was like the print of a savage foot in the deserts. Here, indeed, man seemed the outcast not only of society, but of nature, and with na-

ture to have waged war. The son had rebelled against the mother; he had ceased to address himself to her, and she had withdrawn from him her gifts.

There was a deep hopeless melancholy in this scene of abandonment and desolation, that I never felt before. If despair could be expressed by scenery, it was written on the face of this country.

"I pity the man," says Sterne, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say all was barren." I never had the pleasure of travelling that road, but this I maintain to be barren in the extreme. It was, in truth, a sterile and a sorrowful land; and if we saw no beggars, it seemed to be because there were no inhabitants.

It was late when we stopped for the night at a lone house by the wayside, the interior of which I despair of giving you any idea of; for the filth, the cold, "the looped and windowed wretchedness" of this hovel, beggared all description. Buon Convento was nothing to it.

The vetturino had providentially brought with him our supper, or else we should have got none; and it was cooked and sent up on coarse brown earthen ware. Wretched as this house was, it seemed to contain a number of inmates; and the wild ferocious appearance of those we saw, and the hoarse voices of men whom we did not see, which frequently met our ear in loud altercation, "dread-sounding from below," conspired, with the appearance of the place, and the nature of the country, to make it seem fit for the resort of banditti, and the perpetration of

robbery and murder. As if for the purpose of facilitating these ends, the doors of our rooms had no bolt whatever. We barricadoed them, however, to the best of our power, and went to bed; but in the middle of the night I was awakened by the fall of one of the chairs I had erected in my fortification at the door, followed by an attempt to force it open. Starting up in sudden trepidation, I flew to the door, stumbling in the dark over the empty dishes of the supper, and the extinguished lamps, which rolled about with a horrible clatter; and assuming a courage I did not feel, I authoritatively demanded to know who was there, as I hastily attempted to repair my outworks. It was answered by a gruff voice, demanding admittance. In my fright and confusion, it was sometime before I understood that it was for the purpose of lighting the fire, and that it was four o'clock. To us it seemed that the night had only just begun, but it was clear my repose was at an end; so, wrapping myself in my dressing-gown, and guided by the light that streamed through the numerous crevices of the door, I began to demolish the pile of chairs and tables I had raised. When the door was opened, there came in a woman with long dishevelled hair, a dim lamp burning in her withered skinny hand, followed by a man clad in sheep-skins, and bending beneath a burden of sticks. His face was half hid with black bushy hair, and his eyes were overhung with shaggy eye-brows; he had shoes, but his legs were bare, and by his side was fastened a huge knife or axe, much resembling one formerly

in use for cutting off people's heads, but which I suspect he had applied to the less obnoxious purpose of cutting the wood he was carrying. Certainly nothing could look more like an assassin, but we were not destined to meet with such adventures; so, with heads unchopped off, we proceeded on our journey, uncomforted by breakfast. No coffee, milk, chocolate, or bread, did the house afford. Tea we had with us, but nothing could be got to eat. Our road at first, as we saw it by the faint light of a clouded and waning moon, seemed to lie in the broad bed of a mountain torrent, which after rain is impassable, so that an unfortunate traveller may be detained for days in wintry storms on the cold rocky height of Radicofoni, or the still more cheerless sojourn in which we had passed the night.

After some hours of our usual dead march, we came in sight of Aqua Pendente, the first town in the Papal dominions. Its name is descriptive, for it is romantically situated on the brink of a precipitous hill, overhanging the roaring torrent which sweeps its base, and whose waters are swelled by cascades that foam down the sides of the precipice, half hid in the cavities their fury has worn, and shaded with the deep green of the wild shrubs and bushes that bend over their narrow bed.

While admiring the singularly picturesque appearance of this town, as we walked on before the carriage, which slowly advanced up the long ascent to it, I observed, about half-way up, on the side of the bank close to the road, on the right, another

aggregate of basaltic columns, some of which, instead of regular five-sided prisms, had seven, and even more. They were distinct shafts of columns, but not exceeding two feet, or two and a half feet, in height, and about six inches in diameter. As we had never heard of basaltic columns either at Radicofoni or Aqua Pendente, their unexpected discovery gave us no small gratification; and, as far as I know, they have never been noticed by any preceding travellers.

On entering Aqua Pendente, we lose sight of every charm its picturesque situation had promised. It is a dirty little market-town, but it produced us an unexpected breakfast, so I ought not to speak ill of it. We stopped at a little caffé, and got coffee, eggs, and bread; but milk was not to be had, although the tinkling bells of the goats, and the tender bleat of the kids, brousing on the rocks above us, had greeted our ears as we entered the town. This wholesome and natural article of food seems to be little used or valued by the Italians. How much benefitted would their poor, unhealthy, half-starved-looking children be, by such nutritious diet!

It was Sunday, and the streets were filled with men wrapped in their large cloaks, who were loitering about, or standing grouped together in corners, in that apathetic state of indolent taciturnity so expressive of complete bodily and mental inertion, and which at all times characterises an Italian crowd in their enjoyment of a Festa; but this struck me here far more forcibly than in Lombardy

and Tuscany, where there is much more animation among the people.* A post farther on we passed through the formal village of San Lorenzo Nuovo, built by the late Pope Pius VI. on the summit of the hill above the Lake of Bolsena, in order to save the surviving inhabitants of the old town, which stood on the margin of the lake, from the deadly effects of the *malaria* which had nearly depopulated it.

However I may respect the benevolent motives, I cannot admire the taste of his Holiness, in building a set of beggarly cottages in the shape of a double crescent, which makes their dirt and misery more striking and disgusting.

Regularity itself is displeasing in a village, of which scattered cottages, and a rural, natural, undesigning simplicity of appearance, form the characteristic beauty. Its greatest charm—neatness, is universally wanting both in France and Italy. How unlike our English associations is a village in these countries, where a narrow street of dilapidated and windowless hovels, surrounded by filth, and inhabited by squalid wretchedness, is all that answers to the name! How melancholy and miserable do they seem, and how often has my fancy returned to the smiling villages of my own country, where neat cottages, and little gardens, scattered over the green, present the happy picture of humble contentment, cheerful industry, and rural happiness!

* A remark my subsequent experience of the territories of his Holiness abundantly confirmed.

From the top of the hill we beheld the wide expanse of the Lake of Bolsena, which lay stretched in stillness and beauty at our feet, surrounded by winding shores and woody hills, rising from the margin of the blue waters, covered to their summits with aged oaks, the rich red tints of which contrasted well with the dark pines that diversified the woods.

Two small islands, Besendina and Martona, rise from the bosom of the lake. In the latter, according to tradition, Amalasontha, Queen of the Goths, was strangled by command of the man with whom she had voluntarily shared her crown. In the time of Pliny, these were floating islands, but they have long since taken their stations.

At the bottom of the hill stand the mournfully picturesque ruins of San Lorenzo Rovinato, surmounted by an old tower overhung with ivy; the former strength of which, still apparent in its broken walls, heightened the picture of its own decay, and that of the depopulated village it had once served to defend.

There was something of deep melancholy in the roofless habitations, the grass-grown walls, and silent mill of this deserted village, such as I have rarely felt; a melancholy which was heightened by the prodigality of beauty and the luxuriance of vegetation, with which the hand of nature had dressed the borders of this deadly lake, as if to allure to it her victims. That unseen and mysterious power which lurks in the air,—like the serpent beneath the flower,—the *malaria*, reigns over the scene in

delusive sweetness; and while it suffers the vegetable world to flourish, blasts with its pestilential breath the life of man. The dart that spares the fragile flower of the field, and all the rest of creation, is fatal to its lord, and to him alone; for even the animals subjected to his sway, that inhale the same air, live unharmed by its fatal influence.

A few miles from the ruins of St Lorenzo Rovinato, we passed through Bolsena, a village on the very margin of the lake, said to stand upon the ruins of the ancient Volsinium, the capital of one of the twelve Lucumones, or States of Hetruria, which, if we may credit Pliny, was once destroyed by fire from heaven. The corruption of its ancient name has obviously given to the town and lake their modern designation. The antiquity of Bolsena is obvious, even to the most unenquiring eye, by the magnificent remains of sculpture and of Pagan worship which are strewed around. At the entrance of the village on the right, stands a neglected heap of marble altars, Corinthian capitals, and broken columns, intermixed with many a legible inscription, recording the names and the years that have gone by. I was diverted from examining these remains of antiquity, so despised here, and so valuable elsewhere, by the sight of some beautiful granite columns; and farther on, in front of the village church, stand many more of the same, which are supposed to have belonged to an ancient temple. According to Lalande, that most tiresome of all writers, the temple of the Goddess Voltumna stood here. She was a deity, who, in concert

with her husband Voltumnus, presided over the dictates of human will, and was the grand object of worship among the Hetrurians, who seemed to address themselves exclusively to her; conceiving, I suppose, that she kept her spouse in proper subordination. Deputies from the twelve states used to assemble in her temple to deliberate upon the interests of the common weal. It seems, however, to be pretty generally agreed, that this famous temple was situated nearly on the spot where Viterbo now stands. Be this as it may, these columns most certainly never belonged to any Hetrurian temple, but to some building of the Roman Empire; for granite columns were unknown till introduced with the pomps and luxuries of that tasteful but corrupted period.

Few indeed, if any, are the monuments that remain to us of Hetrurian times. The destruction that has overwhelmed their works, and the obscurity that involves their origin, alike vainly excite our regret and our curiosity; and we must ever deeply lament, that almost all traces have disappeared of the early history of that singular people, who, in the very infancy of society, seem to have preferred, with rare philosophical discrimination, the culture of the arts of peace to the alluring conquests of war; and to have attained wisdom, civilization, and jurisdiction, while all the nations around them were plunged in barbarism, and the Romans themselves had not even a name. To these, their conquerors, they subsequently gave their arts, their sciences, their learning, their laws,

and even their diversions; and, however little we know of the events of their history, or the progress of their institutions, we may be assured, that a people who enjoyed freedom, and had organized a regular representative government, must have attained no inconsiderable stage of civilization: for despotism, in some of its forms, is almost invariably the government of barbarous states,—where they have any government at all. Independent of this, the vestiges of their fine arts; their sculpture, their painting, and their architecture; their statues and their vases, would alone attest that they were a refined and polished people.

Amongst the broken granite columns,—which I was describing when something or other led me away into this digression,—has been placed an ancient marble sarcophagus, which was found here, adorned with singularly beautiful sculpture. It represents Bacchus surrounded by a train of Fauns, Satyrs, and Bacchantes; goats led along for sacrifice; panthers chained to his car; old Silenus drinking, and Hercules drunk. From its greatness of style, and classic purity of design, I should have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be a work of fine Grecian taste and sculpture.

To my great surprise, I was assured by the inhabitants of Bolsena, that their town is not unhealthy even in summer, and that here there is absolutely no *malaria*.

It is difficult to credit this assertion, when proofs of disease and depopulation, so incontestible in the ruins of San Lorenzo Vecchio, meet one's eyes at the

distance of a few miles on the borders of this very lake.

But it is a most difficult matter to get the truth out of Italians; and I almost begin to credit old ——'s assertion, who lived among them twenty years, that they only speak truth by accident, and are liars by habit;* for every hour brings fresh instances of their disregard of veracity, even when there would seem to be no temptation to falsehood.

About a mile from Bolsena, we stopped the carriage to explore the woody banks of the lake for some basaltic columns, which we had heard spoken of, and our search for them was successful. They cover the side of a cliff, which is about forty feet in height. The highest column may measure nearly five feet; but in general they are from two to three, and even lower. They are perfectly distinct and separate, but thickly embedded together, and have the same appearance as the few we observed at Aqua Pendente and Radicofoni—that of young trees growing close together and mowed down. In all the three situations, they are on the steep declivity of a hill. I observed several bits of

* My own subsequent experience certainly tended to confirm this opinion in a great degree. I never met with a race of people who had, generally speaking, so remarkable a contempt for truth. I need scarcely observe, that there are many individuals of high honour and unsullied faith; but the general censure, though it sounds illiberal, is, I fear, just.

zeolite intermixed with the blue basalt of which they are composed.

It was evening as we slowly continued to wind our way along the shores of the lake, and through a wood of oak of singular grandeur, which seemed to be the growth of a long succession of ages. Some had been scathed and rent in twain by lightning, and round the gigantic trunks of others the dark ivy had twined itself, clinging to their aged branches, which they threw around in many a grotesque and varied form.

Dark clouds lowered heavily over the still and wide waters of the lonely lake, and the faint, hoarse murmurs of its waves, as they broke against the shore, was the only sound that answered to the mournful voice of the wind, as it sighed through the withered and rustling leaves.

A shepherd, clad in his sheep-skin, and his dog crouching at his feet, was sitting half hid in a hollow of the wood, whilst his flock were scattered among the trees, browsing on the short withered herbage. If report speak true, less peaceful and pastoral wanderers at times lurk among their shades. This forest is noted as the haunt of robbers, and many a bloody deed of murder is said to have been perpetrated here. As we passed along, we caught at times an uncertain view of caves and dusky rocks among the trees, which, dimly seen in the gathering shades of evening, our fancy might have peopled with the forms of banditti; not indeed wholly without reason, for not a week ago, a friend of ours saw, at this very place, the murdered body

of a solitary traveller lying upon the road, with nothing to speak his name and country, or the circumstances of his horrible fate. A vigilant but fruitless search after the assassins, we were told, has been making ever since by the Sbirri, or Papal officers of justice, who, here, as well as in every other part of the continent, are at least semi-military. By the way, I must stop one moment to correct a very common mistake that my countrymen often fall into;—when they hear that a person has been *assassinato*, they conclude that he is murdered; whereas in Italian it only means that he has been attacked and robbed,—but it is more than probable that he is still alive and well.

Just before we quitted the shores of the lake, a parting gleam of the setting sun burst from the sky, bathing the landscape in one flood of yellow brightness, and lighting up every object with sudden enchantment. The rich brown woods, the jutting promontories, the glowing waters, and the distant mountains that bounded our view, laughed in the evening beam, and kindled into beauty, such as I feel it is impossible for me to describe. We turned from this scene as its transient brightness was fading away, plunged into the darkness of the woods, and night closed in upon us long before we had ascended and descended one high hill, and then climbed to the top of another still higher, on the bleak summit of which stands Montefiascone, from which I have now the happiness of writing to you. Here, therefore, I will conclude this most unconscionable epistle, which has been scribbled at

all odd times and strange places, but the most part of it in the carriage; and perhaps it partakes not a little of the tediousness of the way, which the inditing of it helped to beguile.

I have learnt now to make very tolerable pothooks with a pencil, in spite of jolting. Talking of jolting, I believe I never told you that we are now upon what is supposed to be the ancient Via Cassia, (a way now something of the roughest,) which passed by Montefiascone, Chiusi, and Siena to Pisa, and was made at an early period of the Republic by somebody called Cassius,* though who he was, and when he lived, seem somewhat dubious.

P. S.—We have just had dinner, or supper, as they call it; and if we got little or nothing to eat, I must do Montefiascone the justice to say that it is deservedly famed for the most luscious Muschat wine. However, I hope we shall not follow the example of an old German prelate, who, it seems, drank it at this inn till he died.

We left Orvietto to-day on the right, which is also famed for a light pleasant table wine, generally considered the best produced in the estates of

* Sp. Cassius the Consul, who, in A. R. 268, obtained for the Roman people the Agrarian law,—in return for which he was condemned and executed,—could not have been the maker of this road; for Livy, who enumerates all—even the most trifling of his public acts, would assuredly have mentioned this.

the church. So you see we have got into a very convivial country.

The inn here is a paradise to the two last. Still, I wish you could only judge of its merits, and see the den of dirt and wretchedness in which we are sitting, and must sleep. Pope pathetically laments the fate of Buckingham, who was put into "the worst inn's worst room" in his own country. How I wish I could exchange them for the best of both at Montefiascone!

LETTER V.

We set off on this, the fifth day of our weary pilgrimage, as usual, long before the dawn; and after traversing for many hours a dreary, unenclosed, and houseless plain, we reached the city of Viterbo; where, having made a sumptuous breakfast on coffee (real coffee, not made of burnt beans,) and milk,—rarities we had not seen for many a day,—we went out to see the town, which is very ancient, very dirty, and beggarly in the extreme. This indeed did not surprise us much, when we found there were twenty-eight convents of nuns and begging friars in a place which does not contain more than nine thousand inhabitants! The streets are narrow, and entirely paved with flat flagstones, in the same manner as at Florence, but so deep in mire, that it was impossible to see the lava of which our guide informed us they were composed.

This same guide was one of the dirtiest-looking creatures I ever beheld, but he gravely offered his services to us as *Cicerone;* and he was certainly useful in shewing us the way through the town.

We paid a visit, at her own convent, to Santa Rosa, a very surprising woman. "Cowards die many times before their death," but this saint has died once since hers,—a more extraordinary feat than any I ever heard of being performed, either by saint or sinner,—excepting by Liston in Tom Thumb, who always dies twice.

She originally died, it seems, in the thirteenth century; but after laying dead a few hundred years, she came to life one night when her chapel took fire, got up and rang the bell to give notice of it, and then laid quietly down and died again, without any body knowing any thing of the matter. The chapel, however, was burnt down, though she had got out of her grave and rung the bell to prevent it; all her fine clothes, too, were burnt off her back, and her very ring was melted on her finger; but she remained unconsumed, though her face and hands are turned as black as a negro's, and infinitely more hideous than any thing I ever saw in my life. However, they say she was very fair four hundred years ago, before she was singed, and that she never was embalmed even after her first death, but was preserved solely in the odour of sanctity. She lies in a gilt sepulchre, on a bed strewed with silver flowers, but a grate keeps prying eyes like mine at a proper distance, and darkness and wax tapers increase the mysterious gloom. This remarkable saint began, with praise-worthy industry, to work miracles as soon as she was born, by raising a child from the dead, while she was yet a baby herself; and miracles she still continues to

perform every day,—as the nun who exhibited her informed me. On enquiring what kind of miracles they were, I was informed that she cures all sort of diseases, heals sores, and even re-establishes some lame legs; but she does not by any means always choose to do it, thinking it proper that the infirmities of many should continue. I have no doubt that this nun who related her history to me, and with whom I had a long conversation, really and truly believes in it all. She knelt before the saint in silent devotion first, and then gave me a bit of cord, the use of which perplexed me much; and while I was turning it round and round in my fingers, and wondering what she expected me to do with it, a troop of dirty beggars burst into the church, together with some better-dressed, but scarcely less dirty people; and the whole company having adored the saint, received from the nun, every one, bits of cord like mine. I enquired the use of them, and was told they had been round the body of the saint, where they had acquired such virtues, that, tied round any other body, they would save it from "molte disgrazie."* The beggars no sooner got their bits of cord, than they became so clamorous,—though I am sure I had nothing half so marvellous to give them,—that they fairly drove me away. These nuns are all of noble families. They are of the Franciscan, one of the least rigid of the female monastic orders.

* A great many misfortunes.

They are not obliged to midnight vigils, nor any extraordinary acts of penance and mortification, and may see their family and female friends at the grate.

From thence we went to the church of the Franciscan Friars, in which is the painting of La Pietà, or the Virgin and the dead Christ,—by Sebastian del Piombo, one of the most esteemed productions of his pencil. It bears, I should suppose, internal evidence of being the design of a far superior master; I mean Michael Angelo. It is marked with all the force and vigour, the correct design, and bold conception of his powerful genius, and soars far above the feeble compositions of Sebastian, who, like many of the Venetian school, was an admirable colourist, but woefully ignorant of design. "His hand, indeed, was more ready than his head," as somebody observes of another artist; he wanted skill to invent and combine, but he could give life to the compositions of others; and it is well known that he was employed, as well as some others of his contemporaries, by Michael Angelo, who despised the mechanical part of painting, to embody his designs.

It is, however, but fair to state, that my belief of this painting being done from his sketch, is founded on my own judgment alone. The friars only know that it is painted by Sebastian del Piombo. Still, I cannot think that without assistance he could have designed it.

The figure of the Christ, which has apparently been drawn from nature, is nearly black; it is ex-

tended on a white sheet, with the shoulders raised, and the head drooping back,—admirably drawn. The difficulties of the position are completely surmounted. The Madonna, behind, clasping her hands in an agony of grief, strongly expresses the deep, passionate, overwhelming affliction of a mother weeping for her child in despair that knows no comfort. This is its charm: there is nothing ideal, nothing beautiful, nothing elevated. She is advanced in life; she is in poverty; she seems to belong to the lower orders of women;—but there is nature in it,—true and unvitiated, though common, and perhaps vulgar, nature,—that speaks at once to every heart. The picture is in a shamefully dirty state, and is placed in the worst possible light, or rather darkness. It requires strong light, and it is in total obscurity.

Nine friars now alone occupy the nearly deserted cloister of this convent.

There is nothing remarkable in the ugly old Cathedral of Viterbo, except the remembrance that it was there, at the very foot of the altar, that Guy de Montfort, son of the Earl of Leicester the unfortunate favourite of Queen Elizabeth, murdered a son of the King of the Romans. The murderer was at last taken prisoner by the Arragonese, and perished miserably in a dungeon.

A memorable battle was fought at Viterbo in the thirteenth century, in which an army of modern Romans were defeated with immense loss by the generalship of an English bishop. The forces of the Pope, in this singular engagement, were uni-

ted with those of the Emperor, against the people of his flock, led on by this martial prelate.*

Two or three miles from Viterbo, is a lake of hot sulphureous water, which boils furiously, and incessantly; throwing up a thick white vapour that I saw distinctly from the hill on leaving the town; but we had no time to visit it, the vetturino being, as usual, out of all patience with our tardiness.

We began immediately to ascend the long laborious mountain of Viterbo, the classical Ciminus. At an early age of the republic, the consul Fabius, and a Roman army, effected their memorable passage through the then untrodden depths of its forest, and gained, on its northern side, their great and decisive victory over the Hetruscans.†

It still preserves something of its sylvan character. It is covered with wild broom and brushwood, amongst which tower some noble chesnut-trees, and dark-spreading stone-pines, such as Claude Loraine loves to introduce into his landscapes. They give, even to scenes of nature, that repose which breathes in his poetic paintings. And the rich broad deep shade of this picturesque tree, with the tall, spiral, graceful form of the columbar cypress, is one of the most beautiful features of the climates of the South.

From the summit of the mountain we beheld at

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* His name was Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester. The battle was fought in 1234.—*Vide* GIBBON, vol. xii. p. 266.

† Livy, lib. 9. dec. 1.

our feet the beautiful basin of the Lake of Vico, sunk in steep banks, covered with overhanging woods, amongst whose luxuriant shades Autumn seemed to have lingered, as if to paint them with his last and richest tints.

In descending, we observed a cross by the way-side, where, according to the accounts of the peasantry, eight years ago a traveller was murdered.

We passed through the town of Ronciglione, built in a most picturesque situation, on a precipitous bank immediately above a deep rocky ravine, overhung with wood. The roofless houses of its old town, and the grey walls and ruined towers of its Gothic castle, accorded well with the solemn shade of the aged pines which hung over them.

Though no tradition is attached to these unstoried ruins, they speak to the fancy, perhaps more forcibly from the very obscurity that involves them. Through every breach of time, and mouldering touch of age, they awaken the memory of the past; and all the sorrows and the crimes, the deeds of violence and scenes of grief, which successive generations may have done or suffered here, rise upon the awakened imagination. How beautifully the sun illumines these jutting rocks and spreading woods, with its setting beam! Its last golden glow shines in enchantment upon those gray walls, and those dark and spreading pines! Would that I could convey to you an image of its beauty! At any other time, perhaps, it might not possess the same charm; but in such an hour, and such an evening as this, its power is not to be resisted.

Poets in all ages have dwelt upon the praises of moonlight,—and what heart has not felt its beauty? but there is in its beams, even when most brilliant, a coldness,—an unvaried whiteness; and, I own, that to me, that soft and glowing, but too short-lived hour that succeeds the glorious setting of the sun, when all nature is melted into stillness, and harmony, and repose, and painted in hues of softness that the pencil could never equal, is ten thousand times more delightful and more dear.

Poets may be right, to visit the gray and tottering ruin "by the pale moonlight;" but I am clear that the painter, and all who can feel what painting is, should view it when the soft shades of twilight are gathering round, and the glowing beam still lingers in the western sky.

Of all hours, however, that of noon is the most unpicturesque and uninteresting. This is very observable in a summer's day in our own country, and still more so the farther we advance towards the tropics, where the sun, ascending nearly into the zenith, involves the whole face of nature in one universal glare. For this reason, too, I have often thought, that the light of the moon, "when riding near her highest noon," had not nearly so beautiful an effect as when her full round orb, glowing in the richness of the evening, rises above the horizon, throwing her broad lights and shadows over nature's face. But evening advances, and the shadows fall—

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ—

and throw that breadth of light and shade, without which neither nature nor painting can appear beautiful. The shadows, however, are now so broad, and the last lingering beam has so nearly faded, that it scarce serves me to make these pot-hooks, which, as the carriage slowly jolts along, I contrive to indite, less for your amusement than my own.

The costume of the women here is pretty and picturesque; a party of them have just now passed the carriage, their bright eyes flashing at us from under their raven locks. They wear on their heads a scarlet *mantilla*, or square cloth, edged with black, and a black boddice laced up in front, the long sleeves of which are tied to the shoulder with a great many bows of blue ribbon, the white sleeve of the chemise peeping out in the intervening space.

Ronciglione is said to contain about 5000 inhabitants, and is the last healthy place—totally free from *malaria*,—between this and Rome, from which we are—(Heaven be praised!)—only thirty-five miles distant. But it is nearly dark. Adieu! To-night we sleep at Monterosi.

LETTER VI.

Rome, 10th December, 1817.

ROME!—Yes, we are actually in Rome, at least I believe so, for as yet I can scarcely feel sure of the fact; and, as in restless impatience we pace up and down the room, and, looking round, see that it is like any other room, we continually ask each other in astonishment, if we are indeed in Rome, if we shall really to-morrow see the Colisium, the Forum, and St Peter's, or if, after all, it is only a dream?

But I must take up the history of our adventures where I left them off, when the shades of evening stopped my carriage epistle. I think I told you we were to sleep at Monterosi. Vain hope! There indeed we passed the night, but to sleep was utterly impossible. After travelling more than two hours in total darkness,—our olfactory nerves frequently assailed with strong fumes of sulphureous water—our vetturino quaking with the fear of robbers—and ourselves quaking with cold; hungry and weary, we reached at last the wished-for inn, where neither fire, food, nor rest was to be had.

We dismounted in a filthy stable, from whence, as we could get nobody to come near us, we made our way up a dark steep stair-case, covered with dung and dirt of every description, into a place,—for I don't know what name to give it,—whose immense size struck us dumb with amazement. The eye vainly sought to penetrate the obscurity which involved its upper extremity and its raftered height. It was open to the stables below, at the end by which we entered it, a piece being taken out of the floor to leave room for the steep stair, or ladder, by which we had ascended. One dim lamp, whose feeble ray was lost against the blackened walls, only served to make its deep darkness and desolation partially visible, and revealed to us the tall form of a man wrapped in a dark cloak, who was striding up and down this black and empty hall. Stopping short at our entrance, he darted at us, from beneath a large slouched hat, a look of keen and stern examination, which was rather appalling. Another man, rolled in a similar mantle, half raised himself, on our approach, from the ground on which he was stretched, and might have escaped our observation, but for the clatter of his stiletto on the stone pavement, as he composed himself again to rest. It was just the place and the people for an adventure of romance; and we might, if we had possessed brilliant imaginations, have fancied ourselves heroines betrayed to banditti, and made most glorious efforts to escape out of their hands; but we only fancied ourselves betrayed to a bad inn, out of which there was no escape, and we directed all our efforts

to getting a bed-room and a fire. After considerable delay we did get into a bed-room, more wretched than language can describe; open in many a cranny to the weather, unswept, unplaistered, and unfurnished, except by two such beds as it is impossible for you to form any idea of; but as the surly people of the house could or would show us no other, we had no remedy. A fire, that grand consoler of discomforts, was not to be had. The wood was so wet, the wind so high, and the chimney so wide, that while we were blinded and suffocated with wreaths of pungent smoke, and while the wind whistled at its pleasure through the hundred chinks of the unglazed windows, our most persevering efforts failed to make a blaze.

A tub turned upside down served for a seat, but we were obliged to go to the long black den of darkness, which we had first entered, to eat our supper, under pretence that the house contained no other table, and that it was too heavy for removal. Our two stilettoed friends were still there; one stalking about, and the other seeming to sleep. This would not have frightened away our appetite, if we could have got any thing to eat; but though something swimming in oil, and smelling of garlic, was set before us, its appearance was so disgusting, that, after a fast of more than twelve hours, not even hunger could persuade us to touch it. If we did not eat, however, we were eaten; whole hosts made us their prey during the night, while we lay shivering and defenceless. This indeed is almost invariably the case throughout Italy. While the people

draw our purses by day, the fleas suck our blood by night.

We got up, I believe, in the middle of the night, less from the wretchedness of our pallets than impatience to see Rome; and, after swallowing our usual breakfast of bad caffee, without milk, we were dragged along at a foot-pace, which seemed, if possible, slower than usual, for about three hours in darkness, till we approached Baccano,* when the sun rose in splendour, and we found ourselves on the deserted Campagna of Rome.

In answer to our eager enquiries of when we should see Rome, our phlegmatic vetturino only replied, "Adesso! adesso!" unable, seemingly, to conceive any other cause for our anxiety, than the very natural impatience to get to the end of our tedious journey. Our longing eyes were intently fixed on the spot where we were told that it would first appear; when at length, the carriage having toiled up to the top of a long hill, the vetturino exclaimed, "Eccola!" The dome of St Peter's appeared in view; and, springing out of the carriage, and up a bank by the road side, we beheld from its summit, Rome!

It stood in the midst of the wide waste of the Campagna, whose brown herbage was glistening in the silvery dews of morning. In the hollow below us, a ruined Gothic tower, shaded by some strag-

* The second post-house from Rome. Soon after passing it, you see the first view of Rome.

gling trees, formed a fine fore-ground to the view of the distant city. Its indistinct buildings formed a sort of long irregular line, in which the lofty dome of St Peter's, and the Castle St Angelo, once the proud Mausoleum of Hadrian, were alone prominent. Shall I venture to confess to you, that it was with eyes dimmed with tears that I gazed for the first time on Rome? I saw before me the great, the ancient, the eternal city—the acknowledged Queen of Nations—the Mistress of the World, the seat of glory, and the land of patriots, of poets, and of heroes.

Other cities, however great or distinguished, are only the capital of a country; but Rome is the metropolis of the world. Recollections dear to every human heart, in which every nation and people can sympathize, seem to make it the common mother of all. The awful ruins of its former greatness, the proud ornaments of its early years of glory, the accumulated memorials of long ages of vicissitude, and the noblest works of art and genius in every age, unite in giving it an interest and a dignity no other spot on earth can ever boast; and as I gazed upon it—all the long story of its fame, the deeds of its heroes, the shades of its philosophers, and the strains of its poets, burst upon my memory, and filled my heart with emotions that could not be repressed.

Yet who, without emotion, could tread the soil ennobled by so many ages of glory, or behold, unmoved, a spot in whose very name there is enchantment? All that we have read, thought, admired,

and worshipped from our earliest years,—all that awakened our youthful enthusiasm,—all that exalts the mind, fires the imagination, or touches the heart, is concentered on the soil of Italy, and amidst the ruins of Rome.

We stood now on charmed and classic ground, on Latium itself, and beheld around us nearly all its storied field.

Far beyond Rome, to the south, the highest of that range of hills which bound the southern horizon, rose the beautiful woody height of Mount Cavo, the far-famed Mons Albanus, on whose utmost summit once stood the venerable Temple of Jupiter Latialis.

Next it, on the left, Frescati, the ancient Tusculum, rising gracefully from the plain, caught our eye, reminding us of the classic retreat that Cicero once possessed beneath its shades. To the east, our view was terminated by the white peaks of the distant Appenines, which rose beneath a lower, nearer range of grassy hills, called the Sabine Hills. The Sabine Hills!—The very name seemed to transport us into the romantic period of early history. In fancy, we saw the spot where the Sabines mourned the Rape of their wives and daughters—where Cincinnatus ploughed his fields, and where Horace enjoyed the rural pleasures of his Sabine farm. In reality, on their green sides we beheld the white walls of Tivoli, the ancient Tibur; and, farther to the east, Palestrina, the ancient Præneste, where stood the great Temple of Fortune.

Between the Sabine Hills on the east, and the hills of Viterbo (Mount Cimimus) on the north, which we had so lately crossed, the bold ridge of Mount Soracte rose from the plain, insulated from every other height, but no longer bearing even its classic name, which is now corrupted into that of St Oreste. Still, however, it is the most striking, the most picturesque, and, excepting the Alban Mount, the most lofty and beautiful of all the amphitheatre of mountains that surround three sides of the plain. Far as the eye can reach, the dreary solitude of the Campagna stretches about twenty miles, in every direction, to the base of these hills. To the west, a wild sullen flat extends to the sea. A profusion of bushy thickets, and a few solitary trees, were scattered over the broken surface of this unenclosed and houseless plain,—for a plain it is—since, at the distance of sixteen miles, where we now stood, we distinctly saw Rome,—but it is not a dead flat, as many have asserted; on the contrary, it is generally undulating ground, interspersed with broken hillocks, and steep banks covered with wild shrubby oak-wood, or lonely flat-topp'd pine-trees.

Over this wild waste, no rural dwelling, nor scattered hamlets, nor fields, nor gardens, such as usually mark the approach to a populous city, were to be seen. All was ruin; fallen monuments of Roman days—grey towers of Gothic times—abandoned habitations of modern years—alone met the eye. No trace of man appeared except in the lonely tomb, which told us he *had* been. Rome herself

was all that we beheld. She stood alone in the wilderness as in the world, surrounded by a desert of her own creation,—a desert which accords but too well with her former greatness and her present decay. It may perhaps be soothing to the contemplation of the traveller, or the fancy of the poet, to see the once-beautiful Campagna di Roma abandoned to the wild luxuriance of Nature, and covered only with the defaced tombs of her tyrants, and the scarce-visible remains of the villas of her senators; but it is melancholy to reason and humanity to behold an immense tract of fertile land, in the immediate vicinity of one of the greatest cities of the world, pestilent with disease and death, and to know that, like a devouring grave, it annually engulphs all of human kind that toil upon its surface. The unfortunate labourers employed in the scanty cultivation occasionally given to the soil to enable it to produce pasturage for cattle, generally fall victims to the baneful climate. Amidst the fearful loneliness and stillness of this scene of desolation, as we advanced through the long dreary tract that divided us from Rome, a few wretched peasants, whose looks bespoke them victims of slow consuming disease, occasionally reminded us of the tremendous ravage of human life which this invisible and mysterious power is annually making.

I need not tell you that the season of the malaria is during summer, and that, from the fall of the autumnal rains in October, till the return of the midsummer heats, the atmosphere is perfectly salubrious.

Thus the Campagna seems to be the alternate region of life and death. Amidst all the ingenious and impracticable plans that have been proposed to stop the progress of this dreadful scourge, the cause of it has never yet been satisfactorily explained; and till that be ascertained, it is obvious that no remedy can be applied; if indeed it be within human controul, which is a more presumptuous than probable conclusion.

About five miles from Rome, close to the road, on the right, stand the remains of a broken marble tomb, adorned with bas-relief, absurdly enough called, by the vulgar, the tomb of Nero, although inscribed with the name of C. Vibius Marians, a private and undistinguished Roman.

We soon afterwards saw, on our right, the height of Monte Mario, covered with evergreen pines and cypress, which shade princely villas fast falling into decay, and totally abandoned.

About two miles from Rome we joined the ancient Flaminian way. We had previously, as I think I told you, been travelling on what is called the line of the Via Cassia; and from the specimen we have had of it, particularly to-day, I must say, that though it may be extremely classical, it is very rough. I imagine, however, that the jolting we received ought to be laid, not to the charge of the consul, whoever he was, that made the road, but of the popes who ought to have mended it.

But all else was forgotten, for we now beheld the Tiber glistening in the sun, as it silently flows

through its deserted banks, which are flat and bare, unshaded by wood, and ungraced by cultivation.

If no longer

"Arva
Inter opima virum,"

its course is still characterised by the—

"Leni fluit agmine Thybris."

It is deep and muddy, and (which report had led us to expect it to be) neither a large nor a beautiful stream. Yet we almost fancied its winding course possessed some beauty, as our eyes eagerly pursued its wanderings, sweeping round the base of the pine-crowned height of Monte Mario. But there is a charm attached to it beyond all that the prodigality of nature could have lavished upon it. It *is* the Tiber,—the yellow* Tiber,—an epithet it still merits from the colour of its waters, after two thousand years have passed away; and it was not without a complication of feelings, which it would be vain to analyze, that we crossed for the first time its classic tide.

We passed under a sort of arch as we entered upon the Ponte Molle, anciently called the Pons Milvius, from M. Emilius Scaurus, by whom it was originally built.

* Yellow is an exceedingly false and undescriptive translation of that tawny colour, that mixture of red, brown, grey, and yellow, which should answer to the "flavus" here; but I may not deviate from the established phrase, nor do I know a better.

Immediately on crossing the bridge, we entered what was anciently the Campus Martius; and at the extremity of a strait line of road, bordered by high walls, about a mile and a half in length, we saw the Porta del Popolo.

Its name recals the Republic and the Roman people, but it is only the substitute for the ancient Porta Flaminia, the northern entrance of Rome.

It was in vain that our Itinerario told us this gate was the work of Michael Angelo, but a work unworthy of his genius,—we could stop neither to admire nor criticise it,—we could only gaze on it with a species of veneration; for though modern, it was the gate of Rome!

We drove under it, and beheld in the centre of a noble piazza, an Egyptian obelisk of granite, which seemed almost to pierce the skies. This noble monument, the imperishable memorial of an older world, meets the stranger's eye on his entrance into this city of ages, as if to remind him of the fallen greatness of Imperial Rome.

A convent attached to a church adjoining the gate, and just beginning to be rebuilt, speaks to him equally intelligibly of the existing debasement of Papal Rome.

On the right are some barracks, which, as they are for Papal, not Praetorian guards, and, moreover, are the work of the modern French, not the ancient Romans,—we looked at, you may be sure, with sovereign contempt.

On the left, rises from the Piazza del Popolo the abrupt steep of the Pincian hill (the Collis

Hortulorum) once covered with the villas and gardens of Roman citizens, now, in all we saw of it, uncultivated and uninhabited.

Opposite to us, the Corso, narrow, but handsome, opens its direct road into the city, guarded by two twin churches, not unlike porter's lodges, which are remarkable for nothing except their oval domes.

On either side of the Corso, a street diverges in slanting lines into different parts of Rome.

We had abundance of leisure for the examination of every object, while the custom-house officers were carrying on their customary wrangling examination of passports.

Bribery won't do at Rome—(I mean at the gates)—a *lascia passare* is necessary, which we should have written to desire the banker to leave at the gate for us. As we had not taken this precaution, two of the Doganieri mounted the box, and thus, in their custody, we were conveyed down the Corso, in what seemed to me to be a very ignominious manner, to be searched at the custom-house, as if we had been smugglers. A magnificent portico of eleven fluted Corinthian columns of marble, once the temple of Marcus Aurelius, and near the proud triumphal pillar that still stands in commemoration of his victories and his virtues, now serves the ignoble purpose of a Dogana.

We were obliged to get out, in order that the seats in the inside of the carriage might be searched, and thus, perforce, the first place we entered in Rome was one of its ancient temples. It seem-

ed for a long time probable that it would also prove the last, for Rome was overflowing. We drove about for more than two hours, and found every hotel full of *Inglesi*. The lucky departure of one family of them, however, at length enabled us to take possession of their newly vacated apartments, which are indeed most comfortable. You cannot conceive, without having travelled vetturino from Siena to Rome, and lodged in the holes we have done, how delightful is the sensation of being in a habitable hotel, how acceptable the idea of a good dinner, and how transporting the prospect of sleeping in a clean bed. But that luxurious idea, with the certainty of not being obliged to get up at four in the morning, is at this moment too tempting to be resisted; so, good night!

LETTER VII.

Weeks have elapsed since my arrival in Rome, and nothing have I seen of it except the four walls of my chamber. I might as well have been in the Hebrides. I wrote to you, impatient for the morning that I might behold Rome; it came, and found me so ill, that, though I got up and went out in a kind of desperation, violent and rapidly-increasing fever compelled me almost immediately to return, and confined me to bed, till it seemed dubious when, if ever, I should rise again. The fever on my mind increased that on my body; visions of ancient ruins haunted my perturbed imagination. The Coliseum, such as I had seen it in the cork model, was continually before my eyes. I grew worse and worse, till at last the highly-agreeable probability forced itself upon my contemplation, of dying in Rome, without even having seen St Peter's, or the Coliseum, which, you must allow, would have been a great aggravation of such a misfortune. But thanks to Heaven, and Dr ———, who was luckily here, I am still alive, and hope yet to see the "Eternal City" before I die. I had very nearly gone to

an eternal city, indeed; one not made with hands. But this is not a fit subject for joking. I have at length obtained permission to go out to-morrow, and never did imprisoned caitiff look forward to his liberation from a dungeon with more impatient delight.

By way of an agreeable adventure, about midnight, on the second night of my illness, loud cries through the hotel, and in the street, spread the alarm of fire. The master of the house (a Frenchman) burst into my room in his shirt, followed by a whole train of distracted damsels, wringing their hands, while he continued to vociferate, "Au feu! Grand Dieu!" in a key which drowned even the shrill lamentations of the women. To describe it more classically,—

> "Lamentis, gemituque, et femineo ululatu,
> Tuta fremunt; resonat magnis plangoribus æther."

Vollies of smoke rolled down our chimney, where the fire had originated; and, rapidly spreading to the rafters of the room above, gained ground so fast, that, in spite of the promptitude with which all the firemen of the city and their engines set to work, two hours elapsed before it was extinguished. In the interim, the inmates of the hotel fled in consternation from their apartments, all but ourselves; for, conceiving that there was much more danger, in my situation, of getting my death by cold than by fire, and expecting the flames to be got under every moment, I laid quietly in bed; and S——,

who would not leave me, sate beside me until we were both nearly stifled; thus acting as if, like the Irishman, it was no concern of ours the house being on fire, since we were only lodgers. At last we were both fairly smoked out, like bees from their hive; and thus this unlucky illness, which was most probably caused by the extreme cold of the comfortless hovels we had lodged in on the road, was, no doubt, considerably increased by the house becoming literally too hot to hold us on our arrival. To be turned out of bed into the street in the middle of the night, certainly was not likely to prove particularly salubrious to a person like me, ill of a pleuritic fever. By the bye, I find, from the books I have lately been amusing myself with, that in ancient times this complaint was considered peculiar to Rome, and that Cicero himself was dangerously ill of it;* so that, if I had died, I should have died a very classical death, which would undoubtedly have been a great consolation.

The weather, however, is truly delightful. On the very day of our arrival, we experienced an instanteous change in the temperature of the air, and, except for the *look of it*, we have no need of fires; indeed, they die out in the middle of the day, and I am now writing to you, though still an invalid, with the window wide open, on the last day of the year. But the sun is shining into the room, and the breath of the soft whispering breeze seems

* Vide Middleton's Life.

to give me new life. Fogs, I am told, are very rare, and frost wholly unknown here. A shower of snow is such a prodigy, that its fall is the signal of a holiday in all the schools, that the children may see it.

There is, however, scarcely any part of the continent free from cold winds; and the blasts of the Tramontana, the north-west wind here, blowing down from the icy region of the mountains, still retains, though with mitigated severity, the searching keenness of the dreadful Bize of Switzerland, and the South of France.

While this pierces the natives of the South of Europe in winter, the scorching Siroc unnerves them in summer, laying prostrate at once the energies both of mind and body.

I need scarcely observe, that this last African-born plague never penetrates beyond the icy barrier of the Alps, and is wholly unknown in Switzerland, which, in summer, is the true paradise of the world.

* In April 1837 I entered Rome in a heavy snow storm, which had lasted all the way from Genoa & which continued 2 days after my arrival in Rome!

LETTER VIII.

ST PETER'S, AND THE MODERN CAPITOL.

MANY days have passed away since my enlargement from confinement, and still I have never written to you; but it is not the want, but the excess of matter, that has paralysed my pen. I am so lost in wonder, admiration, and delight, that I know not how to begin. I despair of finding words even feebly to describe the objects around me, or give back the faintest image of the various impressions, and the multiplicity of feelings, that crowd upon each other, and overpower me with their force. My mind is confused and agitated like a tumultuous sea, and thought chaces thought as rapidly as its waves roll over each other. O that I could transport you here, and make you a sharer in all I see and feel, and think, and admire; for I *can* admire, but I cannot describe it! Rome is a mighty theme, far surpassing my weak powers; and, like a child that fatigues itself with fruitless efforts to wield a weight too great for its strength, I feel I should attempt it in vain. Twenty times have I given up the task in despair, and blushed for my

own presumption in having ever promised to undertake it. But, after all, I feel you will not think it a sufficient reason that, because there is much to describe, I will describe nothing; and because it is filled with objects of the highest interest, I will give you no account of them. The reflection, too, that at some future day you will retrace our steps, and that therefore our footmarks may be useful to guide you on your way, gives me courage at least to tell you what we have seen, and what, on your first arrival, I would recommend you to see.

The first visit of most strangers is to St Peter's—let it be yours, but give to its splendours only a transient glance; take in its general effect, and leave its details for future examination: then seek the fallen glories of ancient Rome. Go to the Capitol, cross its storied Mount, and descend into the grass-grown site of the Roman Forum; pass on through the ruins of its greatness, till you reach the Coliseum; linger not even there, but retrace your steps, ascend the hill and the tower of the Capitol, and from its summit behold Rome!

Let us then set out for St Peter's.

We must pass, all impatient as you are, for more than a mile, through the mean, dirty, narrow streets of the Campo Marzo—(the Campus Martius,)—cross the Tiber, by the Ponte Sant Angelo, which looks like a draw-bridge to the castle of the same name on its opposite side, and the river like the moat; turn quickly to the left under the base of the castle; choose either of two wretched parallel streets which alike conduct you to the grand Piazza, and

pause at the termination, for St Peter's is before you!

From the wide extended front of the church, on either side, a grand semi-circular colonnade sweeping round, encloses the immense circular area, in the centre of which stands a noble Egyptian obelisk of red oriental granite, between two of the most beautiful fountains in the world, which for ever play, hid beneath their own glittering showers. But the grand object is St Peter's itself. What you may think of it, I don't know; but it is impossible to express the disappointment I felt on seeing what seemed to me to be—not a church, but a large house or palace three stories high, with little attic windows at the top. Its dome is placed so far back, from the length of the Latin cross,* that in the front view its grandeur is wholly lost. The design is so irredeemably faulty, in giving to the greatest temple in the world the frittering littleness of the exterior of a dwelling-house, and the effect, in producing apparent mediocrity of size, is so striking to the eye, that I could scarcely recognize in it any character of a church, much less of St Peter's, that boast of modern architecture, and the latest wonder of the world.

The crowded courts and irregular angles of that huge unwieldy pile of building, the Vatican Pa-

* The Latin cross, or cross of the crucifixion, the form in which our Gothic cathedrals are built, (†) is so called to distinguish it from the Greek cross, (+) equal in all its parts, a very common form of the churches of Italy.

lace, which adhere to it on one side like a monstrous excrescence, are a great deformity. They overlook the top of the colonnade, depress its elevation, destroy its uniformity, and injure its general effect.

Crossing the wide piazza, we entered St Peter's, and found ourselves not in the church itself, but in a covered portico, the interior of which is beautiful, however ugly the external front. It extends along the whole breadth of the building, supported by gigantic marble columns, and terminated at the ends by equestrian statues of Constantine the Great, and Charlemagne, in marble, which, though by no means *chef-d'œuvres* of sculpture in themselves, have a fine effect in the distance.

Five doors, corresponding with those of the portico, enter from thence into the body of the church. One of the ponderous curtains which covers them, was held up for us, by no fair *Corinne,* (who, it is recorded, performed the same office for Lord Neville, and must, if she sustained such a load, have been a lady of amazonian strength,) but by the brawny arm of our lacquey,—and the interior burst upon our astonished gaze, resplendent in light, magnificence, and beauty, beyond all that imagination can conceive. Its apparent smallness of size, however, mingled some degree of surprise, and even disappointment with my admiration; but as I slowly walked up its long nave, empannelled with the rarest and richest marbles, and adorned with every art of sculpture and of taste, and caught through the lofty arches opening views of chapels,

and tombs, and altars of surpassing splendour,—I felt that it was indeed unparalleled in beauty, in magnitude, and magnificence, and one of the noblest and most wonderful of the works of man.

We paused beneath the lofty dome,—which, like heaven itself, seems to rise above our head, and around whose golden vault the figures of the Apostles appear enshrined in glory,—and leaning against the rails of the Confessional of St Peter, looked down to that magnificent tomb, where, lighted by a thousand never-dying lamps, and canopied by the wreathed pillars and curtained festoons of the brazen tabernacle,—the mortal remains of the Apostle repose. On every side the Latin cross opened upon us in lengthening beauty, and decked in various splendour, which the labour of ages, the wealth of kingdoms, the spoils of ancient times, and the proudest inventions of modern magnificence, have combined to furnish. Yet, with all its prodigality of ornament, it is not overloaded; and while its richness charms the eye, its purity and harmony satisfy the taste. There is no vulgarity, no shew, no glare, no little paltry detail to catch the attention, and take from the grandeur of the whole. All is subservient to the general effect. The interior, indeed, on the whole, as far surpassed my highly raised expectations, as the exterior fell short of them. Yet, notwithstanding its beauty, I was conscious of a species of disappointment too commonly felt, when what we have long dwelt on in fancy is seen in reality. It was equal, per-

haps superior, to what I had expected, but it was different; for we cannot avoid forming some idea of any thing we think of so much; and St Peter's, in the inside as well as the out, was as unlike the image in my mind as possible. I had pictured it to myself less beautiful, and far less magnificent, but more sublime. With an imagination deeply impressed with the imposing effects of the Gothic Cathedrals of our own country, I expected, from the immensity of St Peter's, even more of that religious awe and deep solemn melancholy, which they never fail to inspire; and I was unprepared for its lightness, gaiety, decoration, and brilliance. I knew, indeed, it was Grecian, but the lengthening colonnade and majestic entablature had dwelt upon my fancy, and I was surprised to see the Corinthian pilaster and the Grecian arch.—And that arch, however noble in itself, from the necessity of proportioning it to the magnitude of the building, has the unfortunate effect of diminishing the apparent length, which the perspective of a Grecian colonnade, or a Gothic aisle, uniformly appears to increase. There are only four of these arches in the whole length of the nave of this immense church, and the eye, measuring the space by the number, becomes cheated in the distance. This I cannot but consider a capital defect. You may indeed argue your understanding, but not your senses, into a conviction of the size of St Peter's; the mind believes it, but the eye remains unimpressed with it.

The windows, too, are mean and poor-looking, and offensive to the eye. It is easier, however, to point out the fault than the remedy; for windows do not enter gracefully into the beautiful combination of Grecian architecture. They did not originally form an integral part of it. The temples, the porticos, the theatres, and even the houses of the ancient Greeks and Romans, had none. In Gothic churches, on the contrary, how grand and majestic an object is the arched and shafted window! Indeed, if I may venture to own to you the truth, it is my humble opinion, that though Grecian architecture is beautifully adapted to palaces and theatres, and places of public assembly, and public buildings of almost every other kind, it is not suited to churches; and though it possesses a grace, a lightness, an elegance, a gaiety, and a refinement, that harmonize well with the amusements and business of life, it does not accord with the solemn purposes of Christian worship, to which the simplicity and grandeur of the Gothic, and its impressive effect upon the mind, are so peculiarly fitted, that I could almost fancy its conception to have been an emanation from that devotion it is so eminently calculated to inspire.

The Gothic would be as misplaced in a theatre, as it is appropriate in a church. This may certainly arise in some degree from association, but I think there is something in its intrinsic fitness. Before we drove away, I stopped to take another view of the façade of the church, in hopes of being

able to find more to admire; but I am sorry to say, I only found more to condemn.

Certainly some apology may be found for its defects, in the frequent changes of plans, and architects, and Popes, during the building of it; and in the real or imaginary necessity of having an upper balcony for the purpose of giving the benediction; a circumstance which has been so ruinous to its beauty, that we may say with truth, that the blessings of the Popes have been the perdition of the Church. But whatever be the cause, the faults of the front of St Peter's are unredeemable and unpardonable. I believe Carlo Moderno was the name of the man who had the merit of all its present frightfulness. It is singular, that neither this Church, nor that which ranks next to it, (St Paul's), should have had their original admirable plans completed. But we must judge of churches as of men, by what they are, not by what they ought to be; and I must say, that the exterior of St Paul's, with all its faults,—and they are many,—is, on the whole, superior to St Peter's in architectural beauty. Nay, I am persuaded, that if it were of the same magnitude, built of the same rich and stainless stone, placed in the same advantageous situation, and surrounded with the same noble accompaniments, it would be far more grand, and more chaste.

St Peter's and its beautiful colonnades, (the work of Bernini,) are entirely built of Travertine, or, as it was anciently called, Tiburtine stone, brought from Tivoli. This beautiful material, which is of

the sunniest hue, and the most compact smoothness of surface, looks as bright and fresh as if finished yesterday. How much superior is such stone to the finest marble for exterior architecture, in solidity, durability, colour, and beauty!

The colonnades were intended by Buonarotti to have reached in two direct lines to the Castle St Angelo,—but, alas! even the wretched houses which choak up the ground have not been removed. The French talked of doing this, with many other things; but they never did more than talk. Yet the Piazza, when you are in it, requires nothing to improve it. The graceful sweep of the majestic colonnades, the obelisk that tells the gigantic grandeur of primeval ages, the purity of the ever-playing fountains that delight the eye with their silvery light, and the ear with the music of their waters, —present a picture of such enchanting beauty, that I could gaze on it for ever with undiminished delight: But it makes one doubly regret the wretched taste which has disfigured the front of St Peter's itself.

Our first cravings of curiosity satisfied with this hasty glimpse of this glory of modern Rome, we turned our impatient steps to the remains of ancient Rome. To reach them, we had to pass through great part of the gloomy streets of the modern city, and were much edified in our progress by the number of splendid palaces, with dunghills conveniently heaped up against their walls, the endless variety of ugly churches, and the beggarly habitations,

sombre countenances, and squalid looks of the people.

The carriage stopped at the foot of the Capitol. A flight of a hundred and twenty-four steps of Grecian marble, leads in a slanting direction to the church and convent of Ara Cœli, a mean building, not unlike an old brick barn, which crowns the eastern and highest summit of the Capitoline Hill, and is supposed to occupy the site of the ancient temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Down these steps, which were brought from the Quirinal Hill, and are supposed (a mere supposition) to have belonged to the temple of Romulus Quirinus, an old Capuchin friar, so fat he could hardly walk, and two young ones, were descending from their convent.

We ascended by a much shorter staircase, or rather a broad paved ascent* to the modern Piazza of the Capitol, or Campidoglio,† as it is now called, from having been, during many ages of barbarism, the place of execution for malefactors. At the base of this ascent are placed two ancient Egyptian Lions of basalt, from the noses of which a small stream of water issues. These are the Lions that Madame de Stael adduces as a proof that the Egyptians excelled all other nations in the sculpture of animals. It may be so, but I thought them decidedly inferior to the inimitable Lions of Ca-

* Called Scala Cordonata in Italy, from the cordon of stone which crosses it at regular intervals.

† Field of Grief, or Pain.

nova, which we had just been admiring on the tomb of one of the Popes in St Peter's; and I am persuaded, that if they had not the unpardonable fault of being modern,—if they had only luckily been found buried under ground, and broken into a reasonable number of pieces, we should never have heard an end of their praises.

At the top of the ascent are two ancient colossal statues of Grecian marble, which, I make no doubt, may be very fine, and are unquestionably very large; but which, in my humble opinion, are supremely ugly. They are supposed to represent Caius and Lucius, the grandsons and adopted sons of Augustus, under the semblance of Castor and Pollux, standing in twin ugliness by the side of their horses, which, by the way, are out of all proportion with their own huge dimensions.

From the top of the staircase, on either side, a ballustrade extends along the whole breadth of the Piazza; and upon it are erected some trumpery statues of the Sons of Constantine, an ancient Roman mile-stone, a modern one made in imitation of it, and some sculptured trophies of arms, commonly called the trophies of Marius, erected after his victory over the Cimbri and Teutoni, but more reasonably conjectured by the learned, from their style, to be of the age of Trajan, and commemorative of his victories over the Dacians.

Doctors differ, however, and Winkelman* calls

* Storia dell' Arte, lib. 6. c. 6.

them Trophies of Domitian, and maintains, that beneath them, in the Castellum of Water of the Julian Aqueduct, where they were found, there was an inscription, stating that a freed man of that emperor's had erected these trophies in honour of his triumphs over the Dacians. Now, as Domitian never went near the Dacians, and his armies experienced signal defeats in that expedition, one can scarcely conceive, that even an imperial sycophant would venture to administer such a preposterous dose of flattery. Other antiquaries, perhaps esteeming this reported inscription to be somewhat apocryphal, have, in despite of it, pronounced these much disputed symbols to be Trophies of Augustus, erected to him by Agrippa, on the Aqueduct he built, and which, it is related, he was fond of embellishing with sculpture. For my part, I blush to entertain so heterodox an opinion, but I am disposed to think them just what they are called, the Trophies of Marius. That these Trophies, which were destroyed by Sylla, were restored by Cæsar, is upon record;* and as these were found upon the Aqueduct of the Julian water, a work of his age, I think the conclusion by no means unreasonable. Besides, the name they have always vulgarly borne (in despite of the antiquaries) is in its favour; for I can conceive no imaginable reason for their having been called the Trophies of Marius, except that they really were such; even the neigh-

* Suetonius, Life of Julius Cæsar, c. xi.

bourhood retained the name of *Cimbri* to a very late period. At the same time, to speak the truth, I do not think them worth all the discussions and dissertations that have been made—and that I am making about them.

The three other sides of the Piazza are formed by the Senator's Palace in front, and the twin Galleries of Painting and Sculpture on either side, all erected from the designs of Michael Angelo.

The Palace has no pretension to beauty; and the Museums are common-place buildings, tolerably elegant, and extremely ornamented; but neither faultless nor beautiful, and do their great architect no great honour. Indeed, any architect, I think, could have planned as good, and many better. Their faults might be easily pointed out, but I will not weary you with criticisms of what you cannot see.

In the centre of the Piazza stands the famous Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, in bronze. The horse has been much criticised; but the life and action of the noble animal, who seems to share proudly in the triumph of his master, are so admirably given, that, like Michael Angelo, who exclaimed on seeing it, "Go on then!"* one almost expects to see it move. The figure of the Emperor is extremely fine; he seems to be in the act of addressing, or rather acknowledging the acclamations of the people. I turned from gazing on the

* "Cammina!"

countenance of the old martial Roman, and beheld the statue of Rome Triumphant, humbly sitting at the foot of the steps of the Senator's Palace. Surely such a situation has been chosen in mockery; and the colossal size of the prostrate River Gods, the Nile and the Tiber, on either side of her, tend still more to make the figure of the ancient mistress of the world appear contemptible.

All these things, though they have cost a great deal of time in describing, were taken in by the eye in a moment. I stopped only to give one passing glance of admiration to this, the most beautiful equestrian statue now left in the world and descended by a footway at the side of the Senator's Palace to the Roman Forum.

But I will pause here, and reserve my account of it till to-morrow, being far too tired and sleepy to enter upon such a subject to-night.

LETTER IX.

THE FORUM AND THE COLISEUM.

I HAD one advantage, which I am taking special care you shall never enjoy—that of arriving at Rome in perfect ignorance of all it contained, for which I thank Heaven. I only knew that the Coliseum was in ruins, that the very name of the Capitol had passed away, and that the Forum had been degraded into a cattle-market, and was called the Campo Vaccino. To stand on the grass-grown and deserted spot where Scipio had trod, where Cicero had spoken, where Cæsar had triumphed, and where Brutus had acted "a Roman part," was all my hope. What then was my astonishment,—instead of the vacant space I expected to find, where no trace remained of its ancient splendour—to behold Corinthian columns, ruined temples, triumphal arches, and mouldering walls, not the less affecting from their decay;—to see, beneath the shade of solemn cypress, and aged ilex, the ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, covering the

abandoned summit of the Palatine, and to contemplate, in its distant loneliness, the majestic grandeur of the Flavian Amphitheatre.

I stood in the Roman Forum!—Amidst its silence and desertion, how forcibly did the memory of ages that were fled speak to the soul! How did every broken pillar and fallen capital tell of former greatness! The days of its pride and of its patriotism—the long struggles for freedom and for power—the popular tumults—the loud acclamations—the energetic harangues—the impassioned eloquence—and all the changeful and chequered events of which it had been the theatre; joined to the images of the great and the good—the wisest and the best of mankind, who had successively filled this now lonely and silent spot—the lights of ages, whose memory is still worshipped throughout the world,—crowded into my mind, and touched the deepest feelings of my heart. Such to me is the charm of being where they have been, that this moment, in which I felt that I stood upon the sacred soil of the Roman Forum, was of itself a sufficient compensation for all the toils and privations, and difficulties and dangers, we had encountered in our long and tedious pilgrimage.

The Ionic portico of the Temple of Concord still stands in the Roman Forum. At the sound of its name, the remembrance flashed upon my mind that it was here Cicero accused to the assembled Senate the guilty conspirators leagued with Catiline; and, entering its grass-grown area, I felt, with enthusiasm which brought tears into my eyes,

that I now stood on the very spot his feet had then trod.

As if Time had loved to spare every relic of Cicero, I beheld before me, on the green turf, in lonely grandeur, three of the beautiful columns of that Temple of Jupiter Stator, in which he had previously accused Catiline in person,* and compelled him, by the terrors of his eloquence, to abandon his deep-formed, but immature designs, and fly into voluntary exile, and open, therefore not dangerous, rebellion. At every period of my life, and long before I ever expected to behold it, whenever the name of the Roman Forum was uttered, the image of Cicero was present to my mind; and now that I actually stood on the very scene of his glorious exertions and patriotic eloquence, his spirit seemed in every object that met my view.

I eagerly enquired, where was the Rostrum? Not a vestige of it remains—not "a stone to mark the spot" is now to be found; but its supposed site was pointed out to me on ground now occupied by some old barns or granaries, between the Capitoline and the Palatine Hills.

"It was there, then," I internally exclaimed, "that the thunders of Cicero's eloquence burst forth to a people yet undegenerated from their ancient fame, and capable of feeling the virtue they inspired;—it was there, in the latter days, he roused so often the languishing spark of patriotism,—and it was there, at the close of his memorable

* Vide Middleton's Life of Cicero.

Consulship, upon being commanded by the envious Tribune not to speak, but to restrict himself to the oath required of every Consul on resigning his office, that, instead of swearing, as usual, that he had faithfully discharged his trust, he made the solemn protestation, 'that he had saved the republic and the city from ruin!' while the Roman people, who filled the Forum, called the gods to witness its truth, in an adjuration as solemn as his own, and rent the air with shouts of rapturous applause."*

It was there, too, on that very Rostrum, where his all-persuasive eloquence had so often moved the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and made the tyrants tremble, that his head and hands were scornfully affixed, after his inhuman murder, by Mark Anthony, to revenge the writing of the Philippics.

But the unbought, and then-unprostituted title of *Pater Patriæ*, that he received as the deliverer of his country, far outvalued the crown with which that traitor would have encircled the brows of the tyrant who sought to enslave it.

I seated myself on the fragment of a broken column at the base of the Temple of Concord, and as I gazed on the ruins around me, the remembrance of the scenes their early pride had witnessed, the long lapse of ages, and the fall of tyrants that have since intervened, the contrast of past greatness with present degradation, of ancient virtue and freedom, with existing moral debasement and slavery, forced on my mind, with

* Vide Middleton's Life of Cicero.

deeper conviction, the eternal truth, confirmed by the voice of ages, that man is great and prosperous only while he is free; that true glory does not consist in the mere possession of unbounded power or extended empire, but in the diffusion of knowledge, justice, and civilization; that while it is denied to the wanton conqueror of the world, and the despotic master of millions, whose laurels are reddened with the blood of his fellow-creatures, and whose steps have trampled upon their rights; it is the meed of the enlightened statesman, and disinterested patriot, whose counsels have crowned them with peace and honour, and whose exertions have confirmed their liberties; and, finally, that the memory of long successions of imperial tyrants, from Cæsar to Buonaparte, must fade before the fame of Cicero!

But I must restrain my pen, and tell you not what I felt, but what I saw.

Immediately at the base of the Capitoline Hill, stands the Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus. It is built of marble, but so changed and darkened by time, that the eye does not easily give credit to the richness of the materials. According to the general plan of these structures, it is composed of one large, and two smaller arches, with an entablature supported by four Corinthian columns, backed by as many pilasters. The whole building is adorned with sculpture in bas relief, representing the triumphs of Severus over the Parthians, &c., the rude execution of which betrays the declining state of the arts at the period of that Emperor's reign.

At some little distance from this arch, and at the very base of the Capitoline Hill, or rather upon it, stand three fluted Corinthian columns, of Grecian marble, of far superior architecture, which formed the corner of the magnificent portico of the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, erected by Augustus to Jove the Thunderer, in grateful commemoration of his escape from lightning, in returning from Spain, when a slave was killed by the side of his litter. The frieze is beautifully sculptured in bas relief, with instruments of Pagan sacrifice. The fragment of the inscription only retains the mutilated word ESTITVER, which merely proves that it had been restored from the injuries of time, accident, or violence, at some uncertain period.

In front of it stands a solitary marble Corinthian column, which was erected by the Exarch Smaragdus, to the Emperor Phocas. The column may be beautiful, but who can look with interest or admiration on a monument erected on the sacred soil of Roman virtue, by a slave, to that tyrant, whose hands were, even then, embrued in the blood of a suppliant monarch and his guiltless children?

We turn from it to the three beautiful columns I have already mentioned—the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter Stator—the first temple which was vowed to the gods in Rome,* and one of the most beautiful vestiges of antiquity that have survived the

* It was vowed by Romulus, in the engagement with the Sabines, when his men were driven back; but, rallied at his vow, and gained the victory. Vide Liv. L. 1. Dec. 1.

wreck of ages. They are fluted Corinthian columns, of Parian marble, and still support a fragment of their own appropriate entablature. Fragile as they are, and sustained only by connecting bands of iron, their perfect symmetry, and just proportion, strike every beholder with admiration.

I gazed on their beauty till I almost fancied that it had staid the brutal arm of the barbarian in his work of destruction.

Near these beautiful columns stands a high broken brick wall, supposed to be the remains—the sole remains—of the Roman Curia, or Senate-house, of which the Church of Santa Maria Liberatrice now occupies the site.

The structures of modern days that have obtruded themselves here, as if to court a comparison with those eloquent mementos of departed greatness, afford an apt illustration of the degeneracy of the present, and the grandeur of ancient times in Rome.

I happened to be looking—not without some contempt—at a frightful old church on the other side of the Forum, when our lacquey gravely favoured me with the gratuitous information, that it was the Temple of Saturn! I was still more amused to find that, on the strength of an old tottering brick wall, which forms its front, Vasi* pronounces this old hole, which nobody but an antiquarian

* Author of the Itinerario di Roma.

would ever have suspected of being any thing better than a barn, to be the remains of the famous Basilica of Paulus Æmilius, one of the most splendid works of Republican Rome!

Consigning Vasi's lucubrations to the care of the lacquey, as fit company for each other, I troubled myself no further with their antiquarian lore.

On our way to the Coliseum, we passed a row of mean-looking churches, which bound the eastern side of the Forum, and stopped to admire the majestic Corinthian portico of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, disfigured by a church of unrivalled ugliness built within it, which is now shut up, but ought to be pulled down. This portico consists of six columns in front, and two on each side, of Cipollino marble;* and, though entire, bears the marks of having suffered from fire. A part of the noble solid wall, which once formed the cella of the Temple, is visible on one side; and the bas relief of the frieze, which is also carried along this wall, is beautifully sculptured with griffons, sphinxes, &c. A little beyond it, we found the Temple of Romulus and Remus, transformed into the church of the saints Cosmos and Damiano, brothers and martyrs, who now hold it in partnership, and seem to have stepped into the business of Romulus and Remus, the original proprietors of the concern.

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* A species of white marble, lightly clouded with green, which is found, like many other sorts, only in the remains of the buildings of Ancient Rome.

It is an old-established house, the firm only is changed.

Beyond this, stand the three vaulted arches and scattered ruins of the Temple of Peace, built by Vespasian, at the close of the Judaic war, upon the site of the Portico, and with part of the ruins of Nero's Golden House, which he demolished, as too vast and costly for the habitation of a mortal. It was one of the most magnificent temples of antiquity. Its richness roused the admiration even of a Persian monarch; and its beauty was extolled by the refined taste of Pliny. But nothing now remains of its former grandeur, except one solitary column of Parian marble, which is erected in front of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

We crossed to the opposite side, and passed under the broken and defaced triumphal arch of Titus, fast tottering to its fall, but beautiful even in decay. It consists of a single arch; of eight marble columns which once adorned it, four have entirely disappeared, and two only are entire. Yet, mutilated and mouldering as it is, it affords the earliest, and perhaps the most faultless specimen, of the Composite order of architecture, which ancient taste has bequeathed to modern times. The interior of the arch is decorated with two fine bas reliefs, representing, on one side, Titus in his car of triumph, conducted by the Genius of Rome, and crowned by the hand of Victory; on the other, the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, the seven branched candlesticks, the trumpets, the golden table with

the shewbread, and the captive Jews. On the left is the apotheosis of Titus; for this arch of his triumph was not erected till the victor was cold in the grave.

All these, however, though I describe them to you now, I did not observe till our return; for, through the mouldering arch, I beheld the majestic ruins of the mighty Coliseum—the grandest remains of antiquity in the world; and no relic of ancient greatness—no monument of human power—no memorial of ages that are fled, ever spoke so forcibly to the heart, or awakened feelings so powerful and unutterable. The art of the painter, or the eloquent strains of the poet, might avail, in some degree, to give you a faint image of the Coliseum—but how can I, in plain prose, hope, by mere description, to represent its lofty majesty and ruined splendour? How convey to your mind the sense of its beautiful proportions, its simplicity, its harmony, and its grandeur; of the regular gradations of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, that support its graceful ranges of Grecian arcades; of the rich hues with which Time has overspread its massy walls, and of all that is wholly indescribable in its powerful effect on the eye, the mind, and the imagination?

It stands exactly where you would wish it to stand—far from modern Rome, her streets, her churches, her palaces, and her population, alone in its solitary grandeur, and surrounded only with the ruins of the Imperial City. On one side, the

magnificent Triumphal Arch of Constantine still stands in undiminished beauty, adorned with the spoils and the trophies of better times. Above it rises the Palatine Hill, overshadowed by aged evergreens, and covered with the frowning ruins of the palace of the Cæsars. At its southern base, extends the long line of the *Via Triumphalis*, crossed with the lofty arches that once bore the Claudian waters to Nero's Golden House. Behind it appears the dark ridge of the Cœlian Mount, covered with the majestic remains of ruined aqueducts, and encircled with mouldering walls and substructions, the very purpose of which is unknown. At its base are heaped the overthrown vestiges of its ancient splendour; and on its height, amidst deep groves of melancholy cypress, stand the quiet towers of the Convent of St John and St Paul.

On the other side of the Coliseum, vestiges of the Baths of Titus, and the weed-covered summit of the Temple of Peace, are indistinctly seen; and on a gentle eminence, between the Coliseum and the Forum, appear the remains of the double Temple of Venus and Rome, the richly-ornamented roof of which still hangs over the vacant altar-place of the dethroned deities. Around it are widely strewed, in every direction, huge fragments of colossal granite columns, half-buried in the earth, whose gigantic shafts, it would almost seem, no human power could have broken, and that this scene of tremendous ruin must have been the work of the vengeful gods, whose glittering fane lies here overthrown.

We walked round the vast circle of the Amphitheatre. In no part has it been completely broken through, and in only a small segment is the external elevation preserved entire. On this is still affixed the cross placed there by Benedict the Fourteenth, who, by proclaiming it to be consecrated ground, hallowed by the blood of the martyrs, saved it from the total demolition to which it was rapidly hastening, and merited the gratitude of posterity. That there ever should have been martyrs, one cannot but most seriously lament; but since they were to be martyred somewhere, I hope it is no great sin to rejoice that they were sacrificed here rather than in any other place; and most fervently do I deplore the cold-hearted insensibility of former Popes, in not recalling their sufferings before the work of destruction had advanced so far. Had Paul V. consecrated the Coliseum to their memory, instead of pulling it down to build his huge palaces, how we should have venerated him for such an act of piety!

In the inside, the destruction is more complete. The marble seats are all torn away; the steps and the vomitories overthrown, and the sloping walls and broken arches which once supported them, are now overgrown with every wild and melancholy weed, waving in all the luxuriance of desolation.*

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* So great is the variety of plants that have rooted themselves in these ancient walls, that Sebastiani, the professor of Botany at Rome, has published a work in 4to, entitled, Flora Colisea, in which 260 different kinds are enumerated as

In the centre of the grass-grown arena stands a large black cross, which liberally promises two hundred days indulgence to every person who kisses it—(heretics not included, I presume)—and many were the kisses we saw bestowed upon it; no wonder, indeed! The pious persons who saluted it, afterwards applied their foreheads and chins to it in a manner which they seemed to feel highly comfortable and consolatory.

The French—who perhaps did not expect to profit by its indulgences—shewed it no indulgence on their part, but took the liberty to knock it down. Think of depriving the Romans of the benefit of two hundred days of indulgence! They certainly deserve to be condemned themselves, without benefit of clergy. They also carried off, at the same time, the pictured representations of the fourteen stages of Christ's pilgrimage under the cross, which are again reinstated in their ancient honours, and stand round the beautiful elliptical arena, grievously offending the protestant eye of taste, however they may rejoice the catholic spirit of piety.

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growing on the walls of the Coliseum. But this does not nearly include the whole, which, with the various sorts of mosses and lichens, amount to upwards of 300 species. Nearly one quarter of these are papilionaceous, or pea-flowered; and there are three species of hyacinth, one very beautiful, peculiar to the vicinity of Rome. The remainder of the plants of the Coliseum are chiefly such as are found on old walls in the South of Europe.

There are other of their improvements I could rather have wished had been done away with. French taste has formed a little public garden at the very base of the Coliseum, so woefully misplaced there, that even I, notwithstanding my natural passion for flowers, longed to grub them all up by the roots, to carry off every vestige of the trim paling, and bring destruction upon all the smooth gravel walks.

We ascended, by a temporary wooden staircase, to the highest practicable point of the edifice—traversed the circling corridors, and caught, through the opening arches, glimpses of the scattered ruins; the dark pine-trees and purple hills of the distant country forming pictures of ever-varying beauty and interest. We looked down on the vast arena; its loneliness and silence were only broken by some Capuchin friars kneeling before the representations of our Saviour's last suffering pilgrimage, and muttering their often-repeated prayer as they told their beads.

What solitude and desertion!—What a change from the day that Titus dedicated it by the slaughter of five thousand wild beasts, and the savage combats of gladiators; when Roman gallies rode in its ample arena in all the counterfeit confusion of a mock naval fight; and when shouts of acclamation rent the air from a hundred thousand voices at once! On that wide arena, so often deep in blood, were now only to be seen the symbols and the worship of a religion then unknown, but which, even in its most

corrupted state, has banished from the earth the fiend-like sports and barbarous sacrifices that disgraced human nature. Well may we call this amphitheatre the School of Cruelty! When we reflect that the infliction of torture was here enjoyment—that murder was practised for recreation—that the signal* was deliberately given for the butchery of a disarmed and bleeding suppliant—that even woman's pitiful nature feasted on the writhing gladiator's last agonies—and that the shouts of savage joy with which these walls so often re-echoed, were called forth by his dying groans—shall we not be tempted to think men dæmons, since they could find delight in horrors such as these?

The clear blue sky, in calm repose above our heads, breathed its serenity into our minds. The glorious sun shed its beams of brightness on these walls with undiminished splendour. Nature was unchanged—but we stood amidst the ruins of that proud fabric, which man had destined for eternity. All had passed away—the conquerors, the victims, the imperial tyrants, the slavish multitudes; all the successive generations that had rejoiced and triumphed, and bled and suffered here. Their name, their language, their religion had vanished—their inhu-

* The life of the vanquished combatant depended on the will of the people. If they held up the thumb he was spared, if they held it down, he was murdered.

man sports were forgotten, and they were in the dust. But let me restrain myself. Meditation here is inexhaustible, and how long we staid meditating and gazing upon these magnificent ruins, I should be afraid to tell you.

LETTER X.

VIEW OF ROME FROM THE TOWER OF THE CAPITOL.

I LEFT you yesterday at the Coliseum. We retraced our way through the Roman Forum, now no longer, except in name, the Campo Vaccino, and ascended to the summit of the lofty Tower of the Capitol. What a prospect burst upon our view! To the north, to the east, and even to the west, the Modern City extends; but to the south, Ancient Rome reigns alone. The time-stricken Mistress of the World, sadly seated on her deserted hills, amidst the ruined trophies of her fame, and the mouldering monuments of her power, seems silently to mourn the fall of the city of her greatness. On her solitude the habitations of man have not dared to intrude: no monuments of his existence appear, except such as connect him with eternity. A few decaying convents and churches, amongst which the Basilica of St John Lateran stands proudly pre-eminent, are the only modern buildings that meet the eye. From the Capitol, the ancient Citadel, on which we stand, we behold her hills, now heaped

with ruins, and shaded with the dark pine and cypress—the wide waste of the Campagna—the Plain of Latium, bounded by its storied mountains, and intersected by the far-distant windings of the yellow Tiber—the grass-grown Forum at our feet, with its shattered porticos, its fallen columns, its overthrown temples, and its triumphal arches, fast mouldering to decay—the broken wall of the Senate-house—the Palatine Hill, which once contained infant Rome, now overspread with the shapeless ruins of the palace of her tyrants—the lofty vaults of the Temple of Peace—the broken fragments of the upper storey of the Baths of Titus—the lonely and tottering ruin of Minerva Medica in distance—the gigantic circle of the Coliseum—the Cœlian Mount, crowned with the deep shade of cypress, with the broken arches of mighty aqueducts, and the crumbling walls of splendid temples—the massive ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, frowning in gloomy grandeur at the base of the further summit of the Aventine—the grey sepulchral Pyramid of Caius Cestius, backed by the turretted walls of the city—the Tower of Cecilia Metella—and, far beyond, the long black line of the Via Appia, marked by mouldering and forgotten tombs—and ruined aqueducts stretching over the deserted plain in majestic loneliness to the woody hills which terminate the view.

Such was the prospect that extended before us to the south. We looked down upon every spot rendered sacred by the early history of Rome, and it was delightful to retrace the romantic events of

at heroic period, so dear to our childish recollection, on the very scene where they had happened. There, beneath the northern base of the Palatine, the little Church of St Toto, or St Theodore, which occupies the site of the Temple of Romulus, marks the exact spot where the twins were exposed and suckled by the wolf, beneath the shade of the Ficus Ruminalis.

Upon the Palatine Hill, which rises immediately behind it, Romulus was stationed, and Remus on the Aventine opposite, on the eventful day when they stood to watch for the augury that was to determine their supremacy; and when the sword had confirmed the decree of fate, and the victor had murdered his brother, it was upon this hill (the Palatine) that he built Rome, and encircled that city of straw-roofed cottages with mud walls. It was upon the Capitol, the very spot where we are now standing, that he erected and fortified his citadel. It was in the valley between the Palatine and the Aventine, at the celebration of the games of Neptune, that he and his companions in arms carried off the Sabine women; and after the treachery of Tarpeia had admitted the Sabine army into the citadel, it was in the plain of the Roman Forum, immediately below us, that the battle was fought between the ravishers and their foes, which was so theatrically terminated by the wives and daughters rushing in between their husbands and fathers.

The *Via Sacra* was the path the two nations trod after peace was established, in solemn procession to the Capitol, where Tatius, the Sabine King, thence-

forward held his regal seat. The Via Sacra is said to have received its name from the oaths taken on this occasion to observe the treaty, or the execrations uttered against those who infringed it, and not, as I had always ignorantly imagined, merely from being the sacred way to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which then was not built. We traced its now buried line, once tracked by the triumphal car of many a victorious chief, in front of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and beneath the arch of Septimius Severus. But where could we turn, that remembrance did not speak to us of departed glory?

To the west, the Tiber, sweeping round the base of Mount Aventine, whose deserted height is now crowned only with ruinous convents, and with the villa of a barbarian king,* rolls on in its lonely and desolate course through the swampy plain. Some faint traces still mark where its flood was once crossed by the *Pons Sublicius*, on which the single valour of Horatius Cocles stopped the progress of the whole Etruscan army, and saved his country from subjugation.

Nearly opposite are the quays and magazines of the Ripa Grande, the modern port of Rome, where not a single vessel now appears bearing the treasures of commerce to the ancient emporium of the world. Higher up is the Sacred Island of the Tiber, dedicated to Esculapius, formed, if tradition may be be-

* The abdicated King of Spain.

ved, by the collected harvests of Tarquin, which were thrown into the stream on his expulsion, by the indignant Romans, who disdained to eat the contaminated bread of the tyrant.

On this side of the Capitoline Hill, is the Tarpeian Rock, fraught with so many interesting recollections; it is almost immediately below us, but hid from view by the mean hovels that are crowded upon it. Nearly at its base, in the centre of the Forum Boarium, we look down upon the ancient Arch of Janus, on whose grey walls, overgrown with ivy, the thickly-tangled weeds were waving in wild luxuriance. Beyond the Tiber, and washed by its waters, the long summit of Monte Janiculum—the fabled abode of Janus, and the real burial place of Numa—bounds the view, now covered with churches, groves, gardens, and villas. Farther to the north, and proudly towering above the undistinguished crowd of meaner cupolas, we beheld the lofty dome of St Peter's, crowning the immense pile of the Vatican; the Castle St Angelo, the imperial Tomb of Hadrian; the pine-covered height of Monte Mario, and the Pincian Hill, once crowded with the villas of Roman citizens, but now bearing on its summit only the solitary Church and Convent of the Trinità de Monti, the name of which it has received. Till the time of Aurelian, neither Monte Janiculum, nor the Pincian Hill, were enclosed in the walls of Rome, or included in the sacred circle of her Seven Hills. Of these, now degraded in their elevation as much as in their fame, two only, the Quirinal and the Viminal, are

populous. The rest are nearly, or totally deserted. The Capitol, excepting some wretched hovels, boasts few human habitations. To the south, the Palatine, the Cœlian, and the Aventine, are abandoned to the ruins of ancient or modern days. The Esquiline, on the south-east, is chiefly distinguished by the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, on its summit, and the Baths of Titus at its base. On the east, the Quirinal, which derived its name from the celebrated Temple of Romulus Quirinus, is now crowned with the Pope's Palace, and covered with streets and palaces; and the invisible Viminal, which lies, or used to lie, between the Quirinal and the Esquiline, must also be covered with houses, but it eludes all search, and cannot now be traced. But Rome—Modern Rome I mean—lies principally to the north, extending far over the ancient plain of the Campus Martius, with "her gorgeous domes and spacious palaces." From amidst these upstart structures of degenerate days, the triumphal columns of Marcus Antoninus, and of Trajan, proudly rise, bearing on their tops the bronze figures of St Peter and St Paul, instead of those of the martial Emperors, though those warlike triumphs do not seem a very appropriate situation for the Apostles of Peace.

Near the Column of Trajan appears a part of the solid wall of the Forum of Nerva, in which are the beautiful remains of his temple. To the north, the distant prospect is bounded by the insulated classic height of Monte Soracte, which rises from

the plain, not as immortalized in the strains of Horace, white with the snows of winter, but green, as if clad in the soft verdure of spring. Its name is now corrupted from Soracte, to the imaginary Saint Oreste, by the same senseless superstition that dooms a number of unfortunate females to reluctant penitence, and hopeless imprisonment, in four Convents on its bleak summit, in all the lingering horrors of a living death.

To the east, far beyond the deep groves of pine which shelter the eternal city, across the deserted Campagna, and on the green sides of the Sabine hills, rests many a famed and classic spot: the white houses of Palestrina, the ancient Præneste, where stood the great Temple of Fortune, catch the eye; and, embosomed in olive groves, appears Tivoli, once Tibur, the chosen retreat of Rome's immortal patriots and philosophers,—of her poets and her emperors;—where Horace and Mecænas, Brutus and Cassius, Augustus and Hadrian, sought a retirement that was embellished by the charms of taste, literature, and the muses. In the plain between these two hills, a small, still, glassy lake, marks the site of the ancient Gabii.

Further to the south appear the dark sides of Mount Algido, covered with untrodden woods, the noted haunt of banditti; the graceful height of Frascati, where stood the famed Tusculan villa of Cicero, now spotted with the white villas of the modern patrician Romans, embosomed in groves of pine; and the last and loftiest of that beautiful

chain of woody hills that bound the southern horizon,—Monte Cavo,—the ancient Alban Mount, rises from the plain against the clear blue sky, with the town of Albano on the little declivity at its western base. Its summit, once crowned with the temple of Jupiter Latialis, is now occupied with a convent of mendicant friars, and where the Feriæ Latinæ were held,—where the conquerors of the world wound in triumph up the steep, to pay their homage to the god and father of the Latin tribes, —a few black crosses mark the path to the abode of superstition, and daring banditti infest its deep woods, or lurk in its hidden caves.

There, too, near its base, was the ancient seat of Alba, the Trojan town, the mother of Rome.

To the east, far above the range of the Sabine hills, rise the peaked summits of the distant Appenines, glittering in all the snows of winter.

I turned from Rome,—from its towers, its palaces, and even its ruins,—to the classic mountains that bounded the blue horizon, and felt, that however the frail and transient structures of man may change or fall, the eternal features of nature are for ever the same; that if the temples and mouldering fabrics at my feet, were not those on which the immortal spirits of the dead had lived and acted,—at least, their eyes, like mine, had rested on the same hills, beheld the same wide extended plain beaming in its noon-tide beauty, and watched the wanderings of the same stream, as it slowly bears its lonely and desolate course to the ocean. Their feet, too, had sought that now abandoned shore,

where, in their blissful retreat, Rome's greatest philosophers did not disdain "to count the ceaseless billow."* It is *this* which gives enchantment to the scene, and stirs our hearts within us, as we fondly linger over every object consecrated by the memory of the mighty spirits who have passed away, and cling to every wreck of the times that are fled for ever. It is *this* which gives to Rome, and to its classic scenes, that powerful and undefinable charm which seizes on every mind of sensibility, and makes their remembrance live within the heart, whilst life and feeling animate it, and even in distant regions, and through long succeeding years, be fondly cherished there.

For this was the theatre of the world in its spring of youth and vigour. It was the school of man, where he passed from infancy to maturity. That season has gone by—His strength has decayed—He has fallen into old age.—Nor time itself, nor fate, can make another Rome. The Phœnix shall never rise from its ashes,—"Rome is no more!"

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* Vide Cicero's Letters.

LETTER XI.

THE VATICAN.

I HAVE seen the Vatican! But how shall I express the delight, the admiration, the overpowering astonishment which filled my mind! How describe the extent and the splendour of that almost interminable succession of lengthening galleries and marble halls, whose pictured roofs, mosaic pavements, majestic columns, and murmuring fountains, far surpass even the gorgeous dreams of Eastern magnificence, and are peopled with such breathing forms of beauty and of grace, as sometimes deign to visit the rapt fancy of the poet, and seem to have descended here from happier worlds!

Rome has become the heir of time. Her rich inheritance is the accumulated creations of gifted genius,—the best legacy that departed ages have bequeathed to the world,—and here they are concentered in the treasury of the fine arts, the temple of taste, the consecrated seat of the muses!—You think I rave: But it is not mere ordinary grandeur or costly magnificence that has transported me thus. The splendour of palaces may

be rivalled, and the magnitude of temples imitated; but the labour and wealth of the united world would fail to produce another Vatican,—for its beauty is inimitable, and its treasures unpurchaseable.

It will, I perceive, be some time before my mind can be calmed and sobered down to the investigation or enjoyment of these miracles of art,—or, as I know you will say, before I recover my senses. At present I am in a delirium of admiration, and revel among this inexhaustible store of treasures, intoxicated with the sight; as a miser, on the sudden acquisition of unexpected wealth, at first only glotes over the glittering heaps, and has not for some time composure enough to examine his riches.

Its ceilings richly painted in fresco,—its pictured pavements of ancient mosaic,—its magnificent gates of bronze,—its polished columns of ancient porphyry, the splendid spoils of the ruins of Imperial Rome,—its endless accumulation of Grecian marbles, Egyptian granites, and Oriental Alabasters, the very names of which are unknown in Transalpine lands,—its bewildering extent, and prodigality of magnificence,—but, above all, its amazing treasures of sculpture,—have so confused my senses, that I can scarcely believe in its reality, and am almost ready to ask myself, if it is not all a dream? But I will endeavour to give you some account of what I have seen, and leave you to judge whether it is not enough to turn wiser heads than mine.

I had heard from my cradle of St Peter's: It had been my imaginary standard of all that was

greatest and most wonderful in the works of man. But of the Vatican—except of its now dormant thunders—I knew nothing, and it stood in my fancy only as the gloomy and hateful residence of a bigotted and imperious Pontiff. The gallery of Florence was consecrated to my mind as the chosen repository of the choicest monuments of ancient art, of revived taste, and classic elegance. But I had scarcely heard of the existence of the Museum of the Vatican, which, though incomparably superior, has, perhaps from its more recent formation, never attained the same popular fame; and thus its transcendent wonders burst upon me with all the delightful charm of unexpectedness.

The exterior of the Vatican is not prepossessing. It is a huge collection of odd buildings curiously jumbled together, full of sharp angles and strange excrescences; and, as somebody once observed, it is not like a palace, but a company of palaces, which seem to be jostling each other in a contest for place or precedency.

With this view of them, we ascended from the colonnade of St Peter's into a court of little promise, though its triple ranges of arcades, well known by the name of the Loggie di Raffaello, are adorned with the designs of that inimitable master, and painted by his best pupils. But we stopped not now to examine them: we ascended a staircase, and passing along one row of the Loggie, painted in arabesque, with shells, fancy patterns, &c. we entered the first part of the Museum, called the Museo Chiaramonti, from the name of the present

Pope, by whom it was formed.* We traversed a long gallery, the walls of which were completely covered with ancient sepulchral inscriptions of the sculptured tombs of the dead. Among them we observed a marble Ædicola, (or small temple,) dedicated to Neptune. It is a little alcove, scarcely larger than a niche for a statue; and precisely resembles in its form, as well as purpose, the recesses erected in such numbers by Catholic piety at every way side to the Madonna.

Entering another gallery, we passed through a double range of the statues of Heroes, Emperors, and Gods, among which my eye was caught by a beautiful, though headless female figure, pressing forward, her drapery blown back by the wind, by some supposed to be Minerva; but as there is no appearance of the Ægis, others imagine it to be Niobe. I was particularly struck with the fine colossal seated statue of Tiberius;† Demosthenes with a volume in his hand; Antonius Musa,‡ the young physician who saved the life of Augustus by the use of the cold bath, as Esculapius; Fortune,‖ crowned with her diadem, carelessly turning the globe at her feet with her rudder, and bearing the Cornucopia in her hand; and a colossal Hercules, stretched upon his lion's skin.

The statues of the Emperors, except Marcus Aurelius, who is always in armour, are all heroic; that is, nude; with the globe surmounted by a little winged Victory in their hand.

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* Pius VII. Chiaramonti.

† Found at Piperno.

‡ Found at Veii.

‖ Found at Ostia.

We passed on, without noticing more than a few of the statues; and scarcely glancing at the busts, and bassi relievi, and minuter figures which appeared between them, we ascended a flight of stairs adorned with columns of polished granite, and painted in fresco by Daniel di Volterra,—and found ourselves in what the inscription and guides informed us,—is the Museo Pio Clementino, founded by Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) and enlarged by the late Pope Pius VI. (Braschi.) Before us, we saw the famous Torso,* the favourite study of Michael Angelo Buonarotti; although a mere trunk, without head, arms, or legs, it must ever form the model of the sculptor, and the admiration of every mind of taste. At the first glance, its perfection may not strike those unused to mutilated statuary; but the more it is looked at, the more it will be admired. The bend of the back, the curve of the side, the noble style, the easy commanding air, the majestic figure, the truth of nature, and faultless perfection of design, have perhaps never been equalled. It is seated on a lion's skin, and is supposed to be Hercules in repose. It is inscribed with the sculptor's name, Apollonius the Athenian, who is conjectured to have lived in the grand era of sculpture, immediately after the time of Alexander the Great.

Some beautiful fragments of statuary are standing on the ground beside it, of which the fine folds and fall of the drapery are said to have been the frequent study of Raphael, who formed his taste,

* Found at Rome in the Campo di Fiori.

and his own noble style of drapery, chiefly upon ancient models.

I lifted up my eyes from the contemplation of those beautiful relics at my feet, and beheld opposite to me the famous Meleager, one of the finest statues in the world.*

Beside us was the Sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, the great-grandfather of Scipio Africanus. It is of plain peperin stone, but I have never seen a more beautiful sepulchral monument than this simple Doric tomb. Such is the chaste simplicity of the form and workmanship, that it still serves as a model for artists. Does not this seem to prove, that the arts, at an early period of the Republic, had attained a much higher degree of perfection than we have been taught to believe? An unknown laurelled bust of the same material, sometimes ascribed to the poet Ennius, found in the same vault, is placed upon it; and it is surrounded with the sepulchral inscriptions of many of the Scipios, but not of the Conqueror of Hannibal, whose ashes did not rest in the tomb of his fathers.

Time was not allowed me to examine these, or any thing else; and I was hurried away, though not till I had stolen a look at an exquisite pair of legs, said to have belonged to Bacchus, (though how that can be proved I can't imagine,) which were standing in a corner by themselves.

We next entered an octagonal court, surrounded with a portico adorned with noble columns of

* Meleager, found at Rome, on the Esquiline Hill, near St Martini di Monti. Vide Aldorvandi Statue, p. 117.

marble, and filled with the most splendid monuments of ancient taste. Statues and bassi relievi of faultless beauty; baths in which the luxurious Romans once immersed themselves, formed of ancient marbles and everlasting granites, but bright with all the polish and purity of recent finish: Sarcophagi of Emperors, adorned with exquisite sculpture; votive altars, stupendous vases, and more, far more precious remains of the arts and splendours of antiquity than I can enumerate, meet the eye in every direction, while the soothing music of a fountain, the only sound that is heard, refreshes the senses, and makes silence harmonious.

"Sopra gli altri ornamenti ricchi e belli
Ch'erano assai nella gioconda stanza,
V'era una fonte, che per piu ruscelli
Spargea freschissime acque in abbondanza."

Indeed, the whole scene of the Vatican seems to have been described by Ariosto in his Palace of Enchantment,—

"L'alte colonne, e i capitelli d'oro
Da chi i gemmati palchi eran soffulti,
Iperegrini marmi chi vi foro
Da dotta mano in vario forme sculti.
Pitture e getti, e tant'altro lavoro
— — — — —
Mostran che non bastaro a tante mole
Di venti re insieme, le ricchezze sole."

Leaving this court, in admiration of its beauty, though as yet ignorant of the treasures it conceal-

ed, we entered the Hall of Animals, which is peopled, something like Noah's ark, with figures of wild beasts and tame, birds, fishes, and reptiles, crocodiles, and men, ancient and modern, of all kinds and sizes. Some of these are admirably executed. An ass's head, (nature itself,) a *live* lobster, and a few more, particularly struck us among the motley assemblage; and it is curious to see how closely the natural colours of the animals are imitated in the variety of ancient marbles.

We observed here, as well as in several other parts of this Museum, the Sacrifice of Mithra, a deity, whose worship, according to Plutarch, was first introduced into Italy in the time of Pompey, but which did not obtain much in Rome until the reign of Caracalla. There can be no doubt that Mithra was originally, as the symbol of the Sun or Fire, the great God of the Persians; but after the time of Zoroaster, he was adored as the mediator between their Orosmadus and Arimanes,—their Principles of Good and Evil,—their God and their Devil. He appears here between the sun and the moon, pressing one knee on the back of a prostrate bull, whose neck he pierces with a dagger. But the ancient Persians admitted no image of their gods, no temples, no altars;* and these representations we see of Mithra, are those of the Romans, who have accordingly invested him with the Phrygian cap and trowsers, which were the distinguish-

* Cicer. de Leg. l. ii. c. 26. Strab. l. xv. p. 1064.

ing signs they gave to all barbarians; that is, to all other nations except their own and the Greeks.

The serpent, dog, reptiles, and other mystic signs which surround Mithra, have been fully discussed in many learned treatises, to which, if curious, you may refer.*

From the Hall of the Animals we pass into another great saloon, supported by columns of Giallo antico marble; at one end of which, wrapt in his pallium, and wielding his thunderbolts, sits Jupiter, who may in some sort be called the father of this Museum, as he was of the gods, for his was the first statue that was ever placed here.

At the other end, reclining in all the abandonment of grief, is the beautiful and sorrowing statue of the lost Cleopatra, perhaps the same which was made to grace the triumph of Augustus. By some it is supposed to represent Ariadne Abbandonata, but there seems to be too much of fullness in the figure, and of Asiatic voluptuousness,—to accord with any thing but the Egyptian Queen; not to mention the serpent on the arm, or, as some will have it, the bracelet in the form of a serpent,—though why should a bracelet have a form so strange? Why, contrary to all the rules of art, should such unmeaning ornaments be at all introduced into heroic sculpture? and why should it not be gilt, as, when introduced into sculpture of

* Vandal, De Antiq. quin. et marm. P. della Torra Monument. Vit. Aut de Mithra, chap. j. &c.

any kind, they invariably were? It is particularly recorded, too, that Cleopatra was found after her death in the very attitude in which this statue is represented, with her right arm thrown back behind her head.*

After Cleopatra, the famous seated statues of the two Greek poets,—though the character of their countenances is perhaps rather that of philosophers, —are by far the finest in this noble hall. That of Menander is particularly beautiful.

Of the numerous statues it contains, the Shepherd Paris, in his Phrygian cap, seated on a rock, with the apple in his hand, as if considering to whom to give it,—a Roman lady, (christened Livia,) whose noble figure N. Poussin delighted to study; a beautiful little Muse; a Diana; a basso relievo of Michael Angelo's, the only one of his I have ever seen, representing one of the Medici Princes raising Virtue and expelling Vice; the bust of Nero, with the laurel crown he won at the Olympic games; the admirable busts, supposed to be of Cato and Portia; with those of Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, and the beautiful Antinous, are all that I can now remember to have seen in my hasty progress up and down it.

In an adjoining cabinet, the richness, beauty, and delicacy of which almost transport us into the fa-

* Vide Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, lib. vi. chap. 6. who cites Galen ad Pison de Theriaca, tom. xiii. c. 8. p. 341. Edit., Charter.

bled regions of enchantment, supported with columns and pilasters of transparent alabaster, adorned with ancient bassi relievi of exquisite sculpture, and floored with the bright pictured mosaics of imperial palaces,—the imperishable colours of which seem reflected in the classic designs of the painted ceiling above; in this beautiful chamber are arranged in marble niches, the famous Ganymede, perhaps the finest extant; the crouching Venus; the Faun of Hadrian's villa, in Rosso Antico, with his sparkling eyes, his festive face, his pendent grapes, his basket, his pedum, and his goat; a beautiful Bacchante, with all her Grecian grace; a Nymph of Diana, bearing a torch; Adonis,—but if I begin to particularize thus, we shall never get through the Vatican. This beautiful little apartment is called the Stanza delle Maschere, from the ancient masks which form the subject of the mosaic on the floor. The view from the balcony in front of the windows is that which gave the name of *Belvedere* to this Museum, and in consequence to the Apollo, and some of its finest pieces of sculpture.

It commands a prospect over the vale of the Tiber to the pine-covered height of Monte Mario; but the hues which the brilliant sky of Italy sheds over it must be seen before its beauty can be imagined.

Our admiration was next called forth by the Hall of the Muses, who fill a temple worthy of themselves. The heavenly Sisters are ranged around, seemingly unconsciously lost in the blissful Paradise of Fancy, or touching their golden harps, or

bursting into strains of unpremeditated eloquence; whilst Apollo Musagetes, or, more properly, Cyterodos, dressed in the flowing robes he wears when he leads the sacred Nine, is striking the lyre in the wrapt ecstacy of inspiration. These invaluable statues were found in the Villa Adriana.

Between the figures of the Muses are appropriately ranged the Grecian Termini of the ancient poets and philosophers—of Sophocles and Euripides; Socrates and Alcibiades. The fresco painting of the vaulted roof represents Apollo, with the Muses, and the Bards whom on earth they had inspired. All here is in unison with this Temple sacred to the Nine.

We passed on to a vast circular hall of still more striking magnificence, surrounded by busts and statues of colossal size and the most exquisite sculpture, amongst which our eye, as it rapidly glanced around, was caught by the majestic form of the benignant Ceres,—the warlike Juno Lanuvina in her goat-skin garb, her dart, her buckler, and her helmet, rushing to battle,—and the same goddess, arrayed in her regal diadem as Queen of Heaven. The imperial busts of Hadrian, and the downcast pensive glance of his inseparable and idolized favourite, the beautiful Antinous; the majesty of Jupiter, the King of Heaven; and the dark and grisly head of Jupiter Serapis, the Monarch of Hell, once crowned with the sevenfold rays of the planets; the head of Ocean, entwined with grapes, as synonymous of plenty; together with many others,

which I forbear to enumerate, attracted our attention.

In the centre, elevated above a beautiful ancient mosaic pavement,—which encircles the colossal head of Medusa, and represents the combat of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ,*—stands a stupendous porphyry vase, which almost fills this immense hall with its vast circumference. It is of one piece, and measures forty-two feet round.

We entered the Hall of the Grecian Cross by magnificent gates of bronze, the doorway of which is sustained by two colossal Egyptian Caryatides† of granite, brought from the ruins of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, and both supposed to represent Antinous, under the figure of an Egyptian priest.

In this hall stand the immense porphyry Sarcophagi of the Empress Helena, the mother, and Constantia, the daughter, of Constantine the Great, who, being the first Christian princesses in the

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* Found in the Ruins of Ocriculum on the Tiber, about forty miles from Rome.

† I suspect this term to be improperly used here, though the error is so general, that it would perhaps seem like pedantry to avoid it. But Caryatides are, strictly speaking, the *female* bearers of entablatures only, and are supposed to have received their name from the captive women of Caria, whom, to perpetuate the memory of their conquest, the Athenians represented thus, as slaves supporting the capitals of the columns in their temples. Male figures, when so employed in architecture, are technically called Telamones.

world, were of course canonized as saints, as their Pagan predecessors had been deified as goddesses.

The mosaic pavement in this hall, which represents masks and other grotesque designs, with a head of Minerva in the centre, was brought from the ruins of Tusculum, and is believed to have belonged to Cicero's Tusculan villa. If not certain, this is at least probable. You may therefore conceive with what respect I gazed at the very figures on which his eyes must have rested, amidst the philosophic pursuits and domestic virtues of home, and with what veneration I set my foot on the spot where his must have so often trodden.

These brilliantly beautiful ancient pavements are all judiciously placed in the middle of these halls, and secured from injury by a light railing.

Between a double colonnade of Grecian marble and oriental granite, we ascended a magnificent marble staircase, and from the top, leaned over the bronze ballustrade to look down upon the hall of the Grecian Cross, and through the folding doors into the Rotunda beyond it, where the figure of the colossal Ceres stood in majesty that awed us into redoubled admiration.

From hence we turned into a beautiful little circular hall called the Stanza della Biga, from the Biga, or Triumphal Car of richly sculptured marble which stands in the centre, drawn by two fiery steeds, not quite one of which is ancient and highly beautiful; the other is a tolerable copy. It is surrounded by admirable ancient bas reliefs, some

of which, on the sarcophagi of infants, represent the sports of the Circus in all their minutiæ, and with all the tragical accidents that so often attended them. The little Loves that here act as charioteers, perched upon the horses, overthrown and crushed amongst the wheels, experience the real fate of too many of the competitors. A victorious Auriga, or Charioteer, (I believe unique), with the palm of victory in his hand, and his tunic bound with a tenfold zone, stands among the statues in this beautiful little hall. There is a fine Discobolus, throwing the discus, certainly in a very singular attitude; but we need scarcely pretend, at this time of day, to dispute its accuracy, although some connoisseurs have attempted to prove it quite incorrect. The statues of the bearded, or Indian Bacchus; a Roman, with his head covered as if in the act of sacrificing; a Grecian, christened Phocion, (on mere supposition, as usual) and a Gladiator, are all well worthy of notice.

From hence we proceeded through long galleries filled with statues, busts, bassi relievi, and sarcophagi; with candelabras, altars, and inscriptions; with immense ancient vases formed in the most classical shapes, of every variety of the rarest and most precious jaspers, marbles, and alabasters; (of very many of which, no other specimen is to be found in the world,) with Egyptian idols and Etruscan gods; and with every varied monument of ancient taste and magnificence, the description of which might fill volumes. We then traversed

the long geographical gallery, the walls of which are covered with immense maps of the mountains, rivers, and plains of Italy, floating on a vast ocean of the deepest azure, and at length arrived at the chambers hung with tapestry woven in the looms of Flanders, and copied from the Cartoons of Raphael, which were painted for this purpose by order of Leo the Tenth, who considered this tapestry so valuable, that it was only allowed to be shewn on particular saints' days. It would have said more for the taste of this great patron of the arts, if he had taken more care of the precious originals. Twelve of the largest size are nowhere to be found, nor is it known what became of them. Of the smaller ones, seven are happily preserved in England, the rest are irrecoverably lost. We may indeed gaze upon them in these tapestry copies, but it is little better than looking at a collection of beautiful plants in a Hortus Siccus. Still, however, they make the wonderful perfection of these grand compositions so apparent, that they awaken one's most poignant regret for the loss of such treasures of art as the originals must have been. I will just run through the tantalizing list of those which have perished.

First, there are *three*, representing the Massacre of the Innocents.

4. The Adoration of the Magi.

5. The Adoration of the Shepherds.

6. The Presentation of the infant Jesus to the Temple.

7. The Resurrection of our Saviour, who is represented bursting out of the sepulchre, perhaps one of the grandest compositions in the world.

8. The Ascension of our Saviour.

9. The Supper in Emaus.

10. The Stoning of St Stephen.

11. The Conversion of St Paul.

12. The Holy Spirit descending on the Apostles assembled at supper with the three Maries.

13. Religion, Charity, and Justice, in the Heavens; and beneath, two Lions, and other symbolical representations of Leo X. and his virtues.

Even the tapestry copy of another, the Descent into Limbo, is destroyed; and one or two more, I understood, were hacked in pieces by the swords of the soldiers of Charles de Bourbon, at the sack of Rome. I never knew till now, that the Cartoons we possess form so small a part of those which Raphael painted, nor ever heard the loss of the others mentioned. And I find it scarcely possible to convince the Roman cognoscenti, that we have not the originals of them all in England.

The Tapestry Chambers terminate in the far-famed Camere di Raffaello, painted in fresco by himself, which form the extremity of the Vatican Museum. From the furthest of them a door leads out upon the upper story of the Arcades, or Loggie di Raffaello, and a staircase descends directly down to the court below. But the Chambers were closed; the hour of admittance was over, and indeed the brightness of the day was past, so long had we

lingered in the enchanted galleries of the Vatican. For want of another egress, therefore, we were obliged, not unwillingly, to retrace our way through them.

Besides the immense—and to those who have not seen it—the incredible extent of that part of this wonderful museum which we had already visited; the Vatican contains a Picture Gallery, consisting of a long suite of rooms, filled with the masterpieces of painting—the Camere and Loggie of Raphael, painted in fresco by himself and his pupils—the Sistina and Paolina Chapels, painted in fresco, by Buonarotti; a set of chambers filled with sculpture, not generally open to the public, but willingly shown at the request of individuals—and the Library, the halls and galleries of which alone are more than eleven hundred feet in length!

As if this was not enough, another gallery is building for the quantity of statuary which at present, for want of room, is piled up in the magazine of the Vatican. Of these sculptures, the finest is the Nile. After what I have seen, I have no hesitation in believing the assertion of a very accurate and intelligent Italian friend of ours, that you cannot see the Vatican Museum without walking a mile and three quarters! It is not that it would actually measure this in extent, though the Museum of Statues alone is computed to be a mile; but to see the whole, including statues, paintings, libraries, chambers, and chapels, you must pass twice through the Picture Gallery and the Library, as well as several

other apartments, so that I believe the complete tour will be more rather than less.

We had only walked through the Gallery of Statues, for we did not seem to have lingered any where, and yet we had spent the whole morning in our progress; we had, however, reached its extremity, and we had not yet seen what I came there solely to see—the Apollo Belvidere, and the Laocoon.

The omission was intentional. Our guide thought (and perhaps with reason) that if we saw them first, we should look at nothing afterwards, and now pretended that they could not be seen at this hour, and that he must defer shewing them to us till another day; to which, reluctantly, and with secret discontent, we were compelled to agree. In returning, we paused a moment in the court, and, by the murmuring fountain which had charmed me so much, a door was suddenly thrown open, and I beheld, standing in solitary majesty, the Apollo!

Never, never was there revealed to the dreams of gifted genius a vision of such celestial, such soul-beaming beauty! The god of light, and poesy, and imagination, stands confessed to our dazzled senses; and well does he stand here, where every thing seems to breathe and burn with his essence, where all around is his creation, and every tributary form bows to him! He is no inhabitant of the earth, though he deigns to tread it. His home is in the heavens. He looks, he moves, he breathes a god. Divinity is stamped on his brow; godlike majesty

beams from his front. Those "hyperion curls" cluster round a brow formed to command. Milton seems to have had in view his divine form, in his description of our First Parent—

> "His fair large front, and eye sublime, declared
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

His is not merely the rude power of physical strength, that nerves the muscles and swells the limbs of a Hercules; it is the *might of mind* which raises him above brute force, and makes us feel that "a God, a visible God," is before us, and that his triumph is secure: for vainly would a mortal presume to contend with him.

He does not bend on us that serene eye. Some object more distant, but beneath him, for a moment attracts his regard. Some feeling of transient indignation and disdain swells his nostril, and slightly curls his full upper lip. Yet, dignified and unperturbed, conscious of his power, and undoubting his success, he gives one proud glance to see the reptile he scorns perish by his dart, and scarcely pauses in his majestic course. That the Deity has just deigned to slay the Pythian serpent, is, I think, so evident in the whole air, action, and expression of "the heavenly archer," that I am astonished there can be any doubt of it.*

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* The serpent on the trunk of the tree by his side, the only way in which Python could be introduced, because he

The hands, and one arm, have been most clumsily restored by some bungling sculptor. One foot and ankle were originally fractured, and have been very badly repaired, so that every thing possible has been done to spoil it, but in vain. That it is the finest statue in the world, I feel better than all the canons of criticism can prove it. Vain, indeed, is here the cold language of critics and connoisseurs. The heart and mind feel its power, and are penetrated with its transcendant beauty. The Venus di Medicis is beautiful; but her's is mere mortal beauty. How far removed from the unapproachable perfection of the heavenly Apollo!

How often, while I gazed upon it in silent and unutterable admiration, did it seem to be instinct

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kills him from afar, has led some to imagine that Apollo appears here as the God of Medicine, and that he has caused some pestilence to cease. In this case he would not have been represented as having just thrown one of his darts, for *they* had the power of causing, not of curing plagues. But if any one can look at this inimitable statue, and form such a supposition, reasoning must indeed be vain.

Then it has been represented that the employment of slaying a serpent is beneath the majesty of the god; but let us recollect it was a monster that had spread desolation through "his own regions," and that, armed with power from the gods to destroy, was invincible by human force; nor is there the slightest exertion, the slightest deviation from the dignity of the godhead, in the deed.

We know that his victory over the monster Python was considered of so much importance, that the town of Delphi in consequence took the name, and that the Pythian Games were celebrated in commemoration of it ever afterwards.

with spirit and with life! How often did I feel this form was indeed the habitation of a deity! And is it the creation of man? Did he call it forth in its beauty, and endow it with eternal youth, to dwell in the light of immortality on earth? Was a being, so infinitely superior, formed and fashioned by his hand? It is *ideal beauty* revealed to our senses; and it is perhaps the sole instance that man is indeed capable of personifying the image of that sublime perfection which is formed within his soul. Can the mind revert to the period when this shapeless block of marble was hewed from the quarry, without amazement—without almost being tempted to think that the being that formed it, and impressed upon it those attributes, must have been endowed with more than mortal powers?

Description would be the excess of absurdity; even the best copies are vain. No cast, drawing, or design, that I ever beheld, had conveyed to my mind the faintest image of its perfection. From every attempt to imprison it in other models, the subtle essence of beauty escapes. The Divinity disdains to inhabit a meaner form.

You will think me mad—and it were vain to deny it—but I am not the first person who has gone mad about the Apollo. Another, and a far more unfortunate damsel, a native of France, it is related, at the sight of this matchless statue, lost at once her heart and her reason. Day after day, and hour after hour, the fair enthusiast gazed and wept, and sighed her soul away, till she became, like the marble, pale, but not like the marble, cold.

Nor, like the lost Eloisa, "nor the idol of her love, could she forget herself to stone," till death at last closed the ill-fated passion, and the life, of the maid of France.

But I have not the least intention of dying; I only congratulate myself that I have lived to see that glorious work, whose perfection will never be paralleled upon earth.

Yet there is no doubt now that it is a copy from a bronze - not that that circumstance detracts me with from its beauty or merit - Sculpture unlike painting admits of copies mechanically identical with the originals for the whole is done by rule & measurement - there exist one or two good casts of the group - equal, except in material, to the marble statue but the common casts one sees are all erroneous - no one being now admitted to take a cast from the chef d'œuvre itself - In the Belle arte at Florence is a good cast of this & the Nazzoni

LETTER XII.

THE VATICAN.

I MADE it my particular request yesterday not to be shown the Laocoon; I could bear no more. My mind and soul were full. I could think and speak of nothing but the Apollo; and, through the whole of the remainder of the day, nay, even in the visions of the night, his form returned upon me, bright in immortal youth, and resplendent in beauty. This morning we returned to the Vatican, and again and again I gazed with undiminished admiration upon this matchless statue.

It was found near Antium, in the ruins of a Roman villa, supposed to have originally belonged to Nero, for it was his favourite retreat, as well as his birth-place.*

The name of its great author is unknown. His memory has passed from the earth, and oblivion equally involves the period in which he lived, and the date of the work. From its excellence, it was

* Tacitus, Ann. l. xv. c. 23. l. xiv. c. 4.

originally ascribed by Winkelman, and all the critics of his day, to the great meridian of sculpture, the age of Alexander the Great; but, strange to say, it is now universally recognized to be of *Italian* marble; so that, though beyond all question the work of some great Grecian artist, it must have been executed in Italy, and cannot, therefore, be of more ancient date than the empire; for, during the republic, the taste for the fine arts was not sufficiently disseminated, nor the wealth and patronage of private individuals sufficiently powerful, to allure the finished sculptors of Greece to Rome. By some critics, this unrivalled statue is attributed to the reign of Hadrian; by others, to that of Nero; by many, it is supposed to be a fine copy from some great masterpiece of the Alexandrian age, and, from the peculiarly thin folds of the chlamys, (the Grecian mantle) the original has been conjectured to have been a bronze statue.

There is, I remember, a famous bronze statue of Apollo, the work of Pythagoras, described by Pliny. But vain are now all our speculations. All that we can, or need ever know of this admirable statue, is, that it is supremely beautiful; and if it be a copy, we scarcely have a wish for the original.

In a similar alcove of this court, we were shown the Perseus and the Pugilists of Canova, the only modern statues which have been admitted into the Museum of the Vatican.

To turn from the contemplation of the Apollo to look on any other sculpture, ancient or modern, is exposing it to a fearful test; and the Perseus un-

fortunately recalls to us, with peculiar force, the image of that inimitable work. At the first glance, the resemblance strikes us, and we see that it was in the mind of the artist when he conceived his own. Unconsciously, perhaps, the idea predominated; yet as it was destined to replace the Apollo, when carried off, as it was believed, for ever, by the French, Canova might wish to recall it to those who could see it no more. The Perseus is undeniably beautiful—but is it not the mere beauty of form and feature? He is strikingly graceful—but is it not the grace taught by art? His air and attitude, his very tread, have something in them studied, and of stage effect, remote from the truth and freedom of nature. He looks more like a being representing a part, than actually doing the deed—more like an actor of Perseus, than Perseus himself.

It has been censured too, and not perhaps altogether without justice, as effeminate; it is in feminine beauty that Canova excels, and its character, rather than that of the hero, he has impressed upon this work. It is, indeed, a being too soft and refined for a man, much less for a warrior, yet it does not bear the character of a god. The head is fine, and its expression, as well as that of the Medusa's head, have been deservedly admired. The arms and the contour of the limbs are beautiful—perhaps too delicately beautiful. But with all its faults, (and comparing it, as one cannot help doing, with the standard of the Apollo, is it wonderful we should see all these, and more?) the Perseus is an

honour to modern statuary, and worthy of the genius of its distinguished artist.

To judge of the Pugilists, it is necessary to take along with you the story. Creugas—you must really excuse me if I always take it for granted you are quite as ignorant as myself, and never having heard of such a person till I saw him personified here, I conclude you may be in the same predicament,—Creugas, a celebrated pugilist, in an evil hour, agreed to abide, in an unguarded posture, the onset of his antagonist, Damossenus, who is here represented in the act of aiming the fatal blow on the stomach which laid his rival lifeless at his feet.* The figure of the assailant is evidently that which is the favourite with the sculptor.

Respecting the merits of the Pugilists, there will be many opinions. I can conceive that, while some think them little inferior to the Wrestlers, the Gladiators, and the Hercules's of ancient art, others will discern in them only false anatomy, erroneous conception, vulgarity, bad taste, and hyperbolical exaggeration of attitude and expression —that while their admirers only see the perfection of vigour and energy, their contemners will find in them a new proof how narrow is the line that divides sublimity from bombast, and force of expression from caricature.

In another Gabinetto of this court stands the much-disputed—but indisputably beautiful figure, that has been successively termed the Antinous, the

* The story is in Pausanius.

Meleager, and the Mercury, of unrivalled excellence. It originally received the first of these names from its downward glance, which gives an air of resemblance to the beautiful Grecian. But so striking is the head and bust of Antinous, that, had it been intended for him, we should not have had room to doubt. By Winkelman, it was pronounced a Meleager—though destitute of every distinguishing mark from the real or fancied resemblance it bears to the undoubted statue of the successful hunter of Calydon.

By the critics and connoisseurs, and what is far more important—the great sculptors of the present day—it is thought to bear the physiognomy and character of Mercury. The arm which is broken off may, from its position, have held the caduceus. The want of wings is no objection, for it was only when represented as the messenger of the gods, that he was necessarily "feathered." He stands here as the God of Arts, the inspirer of Genius.*

Far be it from me to set my opinion in opposition to those of Canova and Thorwaldson; but I own this beautiful statue does not strike me as bearing the attributes of a god. I should recognise in it the perfection of youth, of manly mortal beauty and strength.

In this, as in every other great work of the Gre-

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* The beautiful bronze statue of Mercury, at Naples, though seated, represents him under the same meditative sedate character.

cian school, its charm does not consist merely in the corporeal beauty—the symmetry of conformation; it is, that we feel this form is inhabited by a soul capable of all that can exalt and dignify our nature, and allied to heavenly things. It is the ideal beauty that we worship. The exquisite form and expression of the head and countenance—the broad and swelling chest—the air of conscious youth that breathes around it—the unstudied grace, and the latent powers of soul that it exhibits, are beyond all praise. The upper part of the statue is faultless; but the legs are clumsy and ill-shaped. It is generally supposed to be a work of the age of Hadrian, but indisputably of Grecian art. It is also of Grecian marble. It was found on the Esquiline Hill, near the Church of Ss. Martino e Sylvestro, which stands on a part of the Baths of Titus. If it formed one of their ornaments, it was probably of more ancient date than the reign of Hadrian; but it may have stood in some one of the many great houses of the Roman patricians, which were situated on this hill.*

In the last compartment of the same court stands the Laocoon.

If in the Apollo we see the fulness of manly grace, and more than mortal beauty—if the serenity of the godhead shines on his commanding brow, in the Laocoon we behold a being of our own nature struggling before us in the heart-rending anguish of parental affection, and the convul-

* Vide Martial, Pliny's Letters, &c.

sive agonies of an instantaneously impending unnatural death.

The blood curdles at that dreadful tragedy. On that hoary head sits horror, in her deepest, darkest, deadliest sublimity. We behold the father in that last, bitterest moment of high-wrought agony, when he hears the faint cry of his helpless offspring, who vainly cling to him for protection—sees them entwined with himself in the inextricable rings of these horrid reptiles, from whose touch nature recoils, and shrinks in agony of spirit from their opening fangs—terror and corporeal anguish mingling with the pangs of parental love and the tortures of despair! The distorted face—the rolling eye—the ghastly countenance—the bristling hair—the racked and working muscles—the starting sinews and distended limbs of Laocoon, give us the picture of human nature in its last stage of horror and of suffering; and that it is human nature, our deep-shuddering sympathy makes us feel too well. Can it be marble that thus expresses the deep and complicated passions of the soul, and harrows up all the feelings of our nature?

To the unspeakable sublimity of the figure of Laocoon himself, every tongue does homage; in its perfection, keen-eyed criticism has never espied a fault. But it is generally, and truly said, that the children are not formed like nature. They are diminutive men. This is true; but they ought not to be considered apart from the main figure—they are subordinate objects in the groupe. Look on

them not separately or individually, but as a whole. Your eye, your soul, your sympathy is with Laocoon himself. And see how they groupe with him! Would the chubby-faced undefined forms, and inexpressive features of childhood, have harmonized with that agonized form? No, the great artist here wisely sacrificed truth of detail to general effect.

But although to metamorphose them into infancy would utterly spoil the group, we must acknowledge that, if their conception be fine, their execution is far inferior to that of Laocoon himself; so far, indeed, that it has been doubted whether they are the work of the same artist; and one of the first of critics* gives it as his opinion, that of the sculptors† whom Pliny mentions as being the authors of this unrivalled work, the figure of Laocoon was executed by Agesander the Rhodian, and the children by Athenodorus and Polidorus, who are believed to have been his sons. It is now evident that the children have been executed separately, and joined to the principal figure, though it was done with such nicety, that in Pliny's time they seemed to be all formed of one block, (*ex uno lapido eum et liberos.*)

It adds, if possible, to the inexpressible interest with which we regard this wonderful masterpiece, which sculpture has never equalled, to know, that during all the ages that have passed since it was

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* Vide Winkelman, lib. 6. cap. 3—10.

† Fuere summi artifices Agesander et Polidorus et Athenodorus Rodii. Pliny, lib. 34. c. 8.

found, the poets, the philosophers, and the princes, whose genius and virtues have blessed and enlightened the world, have gazed upon it with the same admiration we now feel—that Titus* and Trajan have admired it—that Pliny has praised it—and Virgil himself must have beheld it; for so close is the resemblance between the description in the Æneid and the statue, that it is certain the poet must either have copied the sculpture, or the sculptor realized the conception of the poet. And as the great artists who sculptured the Laocoon lived about the age of Alexander the Great, we must conclude that Virgil, and consequently that Augustus, Horace, and Mecænas, must have beheld and admired its matchless sublimity. Three thousand years have passed away since it was formed, and still it stands

* It was found in the Baths, or rather Palace of Titus, which were enlarged by Trajan, on the very spot where Pliny describes it to have stood. One arm (the right) was wanting, but it has been so ably restored, though only in plaister, that the deficiency is no blemish to the statue. It seems somewhat uncertain what modern artist had the merit of this restoration; though, both from the excellence of the work, and the knowledge that Michael Angelo was charged with its execution, it seems probable that it was he. It is in the memory of some old Italians, that the unfinished marble arm, destined for its restoration, by Michael Angelo, and left unfinished in a fit of despair, was lying on the ground at the foot of the statue. It is probable this arm it now bears was his plaister model. The merit of it has lately been given to Bernini; but it is unfortunate for his claim to it, that it was done long before he was born. The two broken arms of the children have been wretchedly restored by some bungler.

in unchanged, undiminished grandeur. It has been the admiration of every successive generation, that the hand of Time has swept into the common tomb; and, while the world remains, it will be the wonder and the praise of the generations yet to come!

Incomprehensible power of Genius, that workest thy own immortality!—That in thy sublime aspirations after perfection, divested of the trammels of matter, seemest to soar even into the heavens, to behold revealed to thy raptured sight, the blissful creations of fancy, the purer worlds of beauty and of truth, and to bring down upon earth the fair forms of light and love that dwell in brightness there,—or, more wonderously endowed with the deep powerful glance of intuitive perception, thou penetratest the hidden mysteries of nature—searchest out the dark passions of the soul, unfoldest the secrets of our being, and bringest to view the unfathomed horrors of death and of despair—What art thou, and whither dost thou tend? Light of the world! whose living fires stream with unquenchable beams through the long course of departed, or of coming time, illuminating the darkness of past ages, and tinging the future with glory and promise—by whose mysterious force we are elevated to rapture, or transfixed with horror—we know thy immortality—we acknowledge thy influence—we feel thy power!

You will, I know, think me distracted, and expect, of course, that my next letter will be dated from Bedlam, or, as I am not at present exactly in its

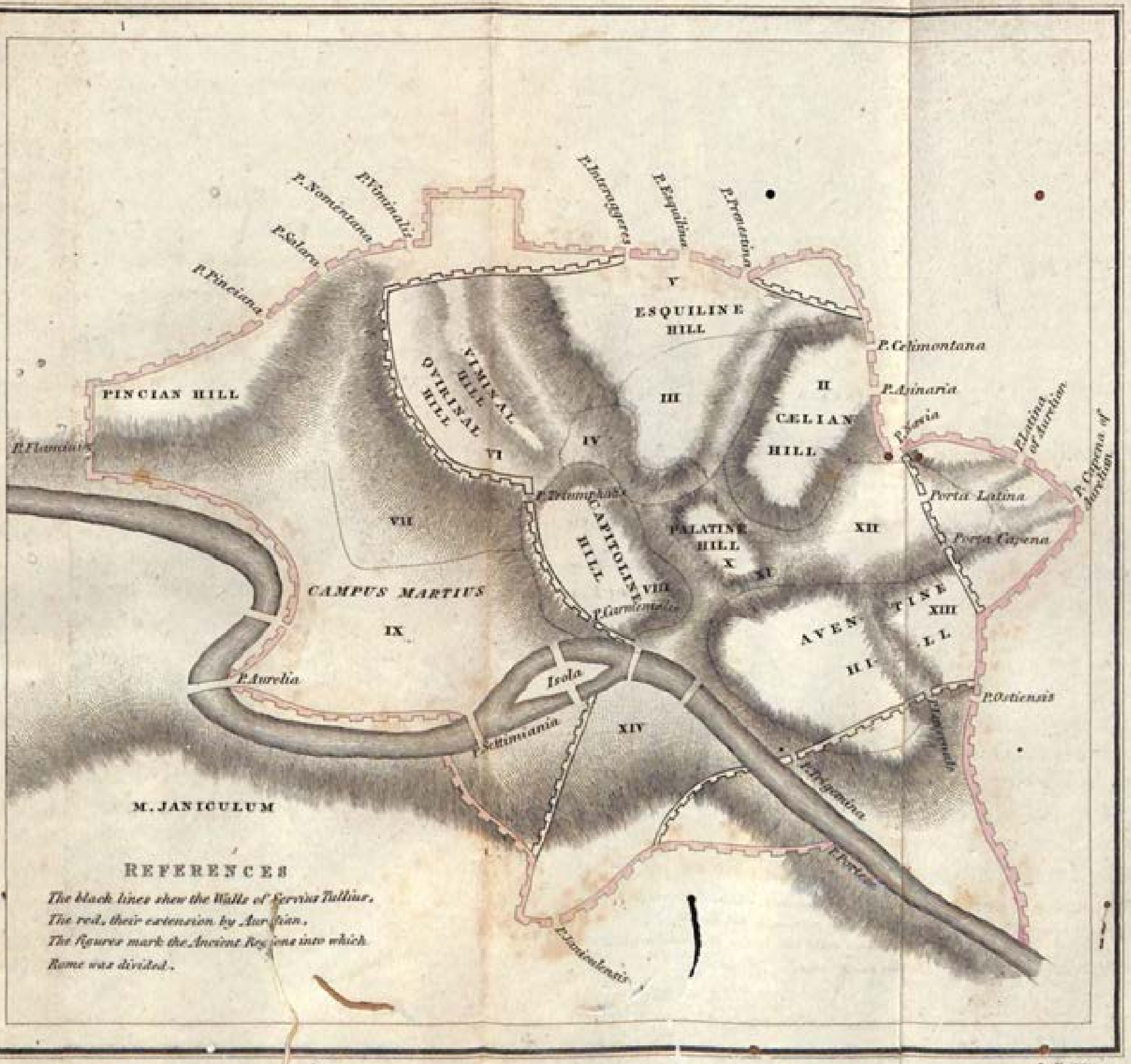
neighbourhood, from the Ospedale de' Pazzi, the asylum for the unfortunate lunatics who lose their wits at Rome. People, however, cannot well lose what they never possessed; and for this reason, perhaps, my good friend, I have not lost mine here.

LETTER XIII.

THE WALLS AND GATES OF ROME.

I FIND myself wholly unable to attend to any thing modern at Rome, before I have seen all that is ancient; and, far from jumbling together ruins, churches, palaces, pictures, statues, and museums, in one wide chaos of confusion, as I see others do, I find the antiquities by themselves more than sufficient to employ my undivided attention; so that, having satisfied the first cravings of curiosity, by seeing every thing in the usual heterogeneous sort of pell-mell manner, I have resolved to visit the remains of Ancient Rome, in her hills, her forums, her temples, her baths, her theatres, her tombs, and her aqueducts, in distinct succession, without regard to their local situation, in order to form as clear an idea of what they once were, as the obscurity in which they are now involved will admit. But first let us look back for a moment on the gradual growth of Rome from the beginning,—see the succession in which the Seven Hills were added

PLAN OF THE WALLS, THE GATES AND THE SEVEN HILLS OF ROME.



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The black lines shew the Walls of Servius Tullius.
The red, their extension by Aurelian.
The figures mark the Ancient Regions into which Rome was divided.

Edinburgh Published by A. Constable & Co. 1820.

to the city, and, at the same time, trace the extension of her walls, their progress, and decay.

With what sort of fence Romulus encircled the Palatine, or what fortifications he erected on the Capitol to shelter his infant Rome, it would now be vain to enquire, if it were interesting to know. We only learn, that having with his own hand drawn a furrow round the Palatine, he confined the city within the bounds of the hill, and guarded it with a wall, mound, or inclosure of some sort. He also raised a distinct fortress on the Capitol Hill, (then called Saturnius) where he instituted his famous asylum for outlaws. The Romans lived with him on the Palatine, and after their union with the Sabines, the latter, with their King Tatius, inhabited the Capitol, and these two hills, with the intervening Forum, formed the city of Numa.

By Numa, however, the Temple of the deified Romulus, under the warlike title of Quirinus, was erected on the Quirinal Hill, to which it gave the name; and it would appear that Numa had a house,* and, as some assert, even another Capitol there, though this is neither supported by much probability or evidence.

After his death, the city was enlarged by Tullius Hostilius, who, after razing Alba to the ground, transported its inhabitants to Rome, and assigned Mount Cœlius for their residence. To give it dig-

* Vide Plutarch—Life of Numa.

nity, he built himself a palace there, which he continued to inhabit during his life.

The Aventine Mount was annexed to Rome by Ancus Martius, who peopled it with the inhabitants of Pollitorium, Tellenæ, and Ficanæ, small towns (perhaps villages) of Latium, which he had conquered. At this period, several thousands of Latins came to Rome, where they dwelt both on the Aventine, and in the valley between its southern height and the Palatine, on the confines of the Circus Maximus.

Although Monte Janiculum was not then inhabited, and never was counted as one of the Seven Hills, or considered an integral part of Rome, Ancus Martius surrounded it with a wall, and erected upon it a fort, lest it should fall into the possession of an enemy. He also connected it with the city by throwing across the Tiber a bridge, called the Pons Sublicius, from being of wood, which was the first, and, for a long time, the only bridge of Rome.

Tarquinius Priscus began to enclose the city, which then contained four hills, the Palatine, the Capitol, the Cœlian, and the Aventine, with a stone wall; and though a war with some of the Sabine nations (or rather towns) interrupted his work, it appears that he lived to finish it.*

What became of this wall we know not, for we

* Vide Livy, lib. i. c. 44.

hear no more of it; but his successor, Servius Tullius, having added to Rome the Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills, and established his own palace upon the latter, encircled the whole of the city with a solid wall, built of large squares of Peperin stone, which he fortified on the eastern side, where it was weakest, by an Agger, a high mound, or rampart of earth thrown up, with a ditch on each side, a little without the wall.

Tarquinius Superbus raised another Agger near the former, but rather farther to the south. Antiquaries still point out some vestiges of the Agger of Servius Tullius, behind the Baths of Diocle-sian; and Nardini says, undoubted remains of the Agger of Tarquin are still to be seen between the Porta Maggiore and the Church of Santa Croce, in Gerusalemme, in the vineyard adjoining that church, which is within the present walls of the city, though without the line of the Tullian Wall.

The Aggeres were for defence, and raised only in one part; the Pomœrium was for sanctity, and extended all round the wall on both sides. It seems to have been a consecrated circle of ground, held sacred—by which is meant useless—for it was unlawful to apply it to any purpose, either of cultivation or habitation.

It appears that it was not necessarily close to the walls, but could be removed to a distance from them. We hear that it was frequently enlarged, without any change been made in the walls themselves. Yet it could only be extended by those who

had extended the limits of the empire; nor could it be done unless with the consent of the College of Augurs. It was extended by Sylla, Cæsar, and Augustus; and probably by Claudian, by Nero, and by Trajan.

The Pomœrium (not the wall) was the limit of the city. Every building within it was considered within Rome. I do not find that the integrity of this royal wall was materially disturbed till the time of Aurelian, who, in the course of his short, but active reign, built a new wall round Rome, enlarging it very considerably,—especially to the north and to the south, so as to comprehend the Pincian Hill, with great part of the Campus Martius, and the suburbs,—but perhaps not sufficiently to contain all the overflowing population of Imperial Rome.

The suburbs on every side were, no doubt, extensive; but the accounts given by some writers, who make them reach to Ocricolum, on the north, a distance of fifty miles, and in the same proportion in other directions, are incredible, and inconsistent with known facts.

The ancients indeed say, that the *villas* of the Roman citizens extended to this distance—just as the country houses of English gentlemen may be seen by the road-side fifty miles from London—but that by no means implies that the suburbs of the city reached so far. Indeed, the still-existing ruins of various small Roman Fora, or market-towns, only four or five miles distant from the walls of Rome, sufficiently contradict that wild idea; and

the tombs which still line the great roads, prove that the tenements of the dead left little room for those of the living.

Numerous passages from the ancient historians and classics might be quoted to prove that the suburbs of the city, strictly speaking, did not even extend to the Milvian Bridge, but it would only be an unnecessary display of erudition.

The walls of Aurelian were not destined to be durable, any more than the empire of which he was for a time the prop. They were frequently shattered, and partly destroyed, in the disastrous ages of barbarian invasion, and domestic contest, which followed the last short reigns of glory.

In the early part of the fifth century, Honorius repaired, or rebuilt the walls, if we credit the inscriptions at the Porta Maggiore, or the blocked up gate, which adjoined the Porta Portese.* But perhaps Honorius, like some other princes, laid claim to more than he merited; for the walls themselves bear intrinsic evidence, from the remains of high antiquity preserved in them, that they are not entirely the work of his age.

Honorius first flanked them with the Gothic towers, which still appear at regular intervals. But

* Both are reported by Nardini, and are to the same effect. I select that of the Porta Portese, because no longer extant. The old gate, which was double, and an extremely curious specimen of that singular mode of building, was removed by Urban the Eighth; and the present gate, which is entirely

they were restored by Belisarius and by Narses; subsequently to which, they have been besieged, shattered, repaired, patched, and even enlarged, by the Popes.

The Città Leonina, in Trastevere, which includes the Vatican Mount, was walled in by Pope Leo Fourth, about the middle of the ninth century.

With all these changes and additions, the walls now form a circuit of about fourteen miles, and comprize an immense extent of unpeopled land. The stranger may wander for hours and miles within the walls of this great capital, in solitude and silence as unbroken as if he were in a desert. He will pass along untrodden roads, and by abandoned habitations; he will see no life within their gates; no human being will greet him, and no voice will answer to his call. Over a wide extent

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modern, was built in a different situation, by Innocent the Tenth.

The Inscription of Honorius is as follows:

S. P. Q. R.

IMPP. CAESS. DD. NN. INVICTISS PRINCIPIB. ARCADIO ET HONORIO VICTORIB. ET TRIVMPHATOR. SEMPER AVGG. OBINSTAVR. VRB. AETERNAE MVROS PORTAS ET TVRRES EGEST. IMMENS. RVDERIB. EX. SVGGEST. V.C. ET ILLVST. COMIT., ET MAGIST. VTRIVSQ. MILIT. STILICONIS AD PERPETVIT. NOMIN. EORVM SIMVLACRA CONST. CVRANTE FL. MACROBIO LONGINIANO V.C. PRAEF. VRB. D. N. M. Q. EORVM.

of Rome to the south, her hills are desolate. On the north, and in the Plain of the Campus Martius alone, there is life and motion.

Nothing can be more heterogeneous than the composition of the present walls which bound this half-peopled, half-lifeless space. In the haste with which parts of the structure were made or repaired, every thing most precious and most vile was used as materials. Entire marble statues have actually been extracted from the very heart of the wall, which probably may contain many more. A very respectable Minerva, now in the Museum of the Capitol, was released by mere chance from her long imprisonment.

But marble and rubble, porphyry and plaister, are all jumbled together; kings, emperors, barbarians, Goths, and popes, have succeeded each other, and alternately demolished or restored; but that the walls have never been completely destroyed or rebuilt since the time of Aurelian, who incorporated, in his extended circle, every building that chanced to stand in his way, is evident from the strange medley of fragments of all kinds and ages, that may still be traced within their bounds. The most remarkable of these are the remains of the Amphitheatre Castrense, the Prætorian Camp, and the Muro Torto.

Besides these curious vestiges of antiquity, which must all be classed as works of the empire, the antiquaries seem to agree, that the present wall, in some places, is built upon the site of that of Ser-

vius Tullius, and even contains within its circle some remains of that ancient erection; but though every body said such things were to be seen, nobody could point them out to us. We were not easily discouraged, however, and accordingly set out to make the discovery ourselves. You would have laughed if you could have seen us issuing out at the Porta San Giovanni, in an open carriage, though the weather was extremely cold, and driving round the outside of the walls at a foot's pace, investigating them all the way with eager eyes and outstretched necks, in the hope of seeing some small remnant of the Tullian wall. Nardini* says, that remains of it are to be seen between the Porta San Giovanni and San Paola, and also between the Amphitheatre Castrense and the Castra Prætoria, and that they consist of "Alcune pietre quadrate, rozzamente frapposte a mattoni." If this be all, we certainly saw them to-day; but there is no great delight in looking at "a few pieces of square stone rudely built up among bricks." As the Tullian wall was built of square blocks of peperin stone, indeed few people would be hardy enough to assert, either that these square stones, now separated from each other by the interpolated bricks, did or did not once belong to it; but that no part of the erection of Servius Tullius now remains, may be safely affirmed.

In the course of our dead march round the walls,

* Roma Antica.

we stopped at the gate of the Villa Borghese, to examine that huge misshapen mass which nods over one's head, and the bulged, uncouth, and distorted form of which is a curious contrast to the beauty of the reticulated building of which it is constructed. This opus reticulatum was scarcely known till the last age of the Republic, and was little used after the time of Hadrian, and never after that of Caracalla; and from the style, this building is pronounced by the best judges to be a work of the early period of the empire.

It has obviously been incorporated in the walls, because it stood in their line. It has been called the tomb of the Domitian family, in which Nero was buried, and which certainly stood where this does, exactly on the top of the Pincian Hill;* but this opinion, I know not why, has been exploded; and it is now supposed, with perhaps as little reason, to have belonged to some of the Roman villas that covered this mount. Procopius says, that Belisarius, fearing it would fall, wanted to rebuild it, but that the people of Rome prevented him, assuring him St Peter himself had promised to undertake its defence; and so punctually has the saint kept his word, that it still nods over the passenger's head to this day.

Vainly have the antiquaries puzzled themselves to conceive with what intention, or by whom, this piece of deformity was made; whether originally

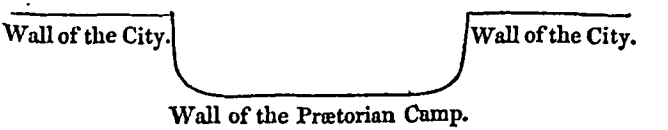
* Suetonius in Vit. Ne.

built in this strange shape, or whether fallen into it by time or accident. It is called the Muro Torto, and that is all that they, or I, can tell you about it.

Between this Muro Torto and the Porto Salara, we passed the Porta Pinciana, now shut up; at the base of which an ingenious friend of ours pointed out a block of marble lying on the ground, with this inscription, "Date Obilum Belisario." This singular circumstance may seem to give support to the popular tale of his blindness and mendicity; but history expressly states, that he died at Constantinople a few months after his liberation from imprisonment; it therefore leaves us no possibility of imagining that Belisarius returned to Italy at all after his disgrace, much less that he ever sat at the gates of the city he had conquered and saved, to beg a halfpenny. Must we then think that this inscription belonged to the pedestal of some statue of Belisarius? Or suppose it forged to support the monkish legend, that the blind old general roved through the world a mendicant?

Between the Porta Pia and the Porta San Lorenzo, we passed along a part of the ancient Prætorian Camp; the barracks, or quarter of the Prætorian guards, built by Tiberius without the gates, but one side of which has been included in the present extended wall of the city, either by Honorius or Belisarius, for authorities differ on this point; but it is certain that it could not have been taken in by Aurelian, as some writers pretend, because the Castra Prætoria was not destroyed till the time of Constantine

The ancient form of the Prætorian Camp has been an oblong square with the corners rounded off, and the length of the wall, and the curves at each end, still remain thus,



It is patched up in many places, but a practised eye may easily trace the fine bricks and beautiful masonry of Tiberius, from the mean construction of a lower age. It is marked all along by a little cornice of brick about eleven feet from the ground; but the ancient wall of the Castra seems to have been several feet higher.

The three towers which surmount this part of the wall, are, of course, of the time of Honorius, Belisarius, or some other Goth.

Tacitus describes the Castra Prætorianorum as near the Viminal Hill, and near the Via Nomentana, which exactly answers to the spot where we find it. Suetonius, too, in his account of the death of Nero, affords additional confirmation of its local situation. An inscription found here on a leaden pipe, (reported by Venuti,) would alone have established the fact; and the ancient wall itself, is the most indisputable evidence of all.

From the remains of the Prætorian Camp we proceeded to the remains of the Amphitheatre

Castrense, which now forms part of the walls of the city, though when included in them seems somewhat doubtful. The date of the building itself is also uncertain. It is only known that it was a work of the empire, destined for the amusement of the Prætorian guards, who hardened their savage nature by the bloody sports of the amphitheatre.

Excavations have been diligently made in every part of the arena, and a great quantity of large bones were found, "which," as a learned antiquary observed to me with becoming solemnity, "may be conjectured to have belonged to the wild beasts that were slaughtered in it;" and as his conjecture did not seem to me to be too bold, I cordially agreed with him. In this harmonious mood, we stopped to view the exterior of this military amphitheatre.

Its remains consist of a brick semi-circle, adorned with Corinthian brick pilasters; and to me it seemed mean and ugly, but this is only a proof of my want of taste, for the antiquary pronounced it to be a work "de bello gusto," and was eloquent in its praise. This wall and pilasters of brick may be very beautiful, though I could not discover it; but they are all that are to be seen outside, and inside there is nothing,—not even one of the bones of the wild beasts that were dug up with so much pains and labour.

I have now given you an account of the Walls of Rome, and of the remains of the more ancient

buildings comprised in them, and I ought to enter upon the Gates; but their ancient names, their number, and their situation, are involved in such complete obscurity, endless discussion, and inextricable confusion, that I shrink from the prospect of undertaking such a task myself, or inflicting such a penance on you. I want courage to lead you into the barren path where we must fight every step of our way, and be stuck fast at last in a quagmire of conjectures.

In the time of Romulus, according to some authorities, Rome had three gates; according to others, four; but as it cannot now very materially signify which, I shall not perplex you with a long discussion on their disputed number, names, and situation, but refer you to Nardini, where you will find the subject treated at large.

In the time of the empire, according to Pliny, there were thirty-seven gates, which certainly seem a most unnecessary number, especially as he says twelve of them were double;* and the antiquaries of this day, who think they know better than him, won't believe him. All the great roads to the city had then double gates; one for those who were entering, the other for those who were leaving it.

At every gate stood the statue of some deity, the right hand of which it would seem was often nearly

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* Pliny, Hist. Nat. l. iii. c. 5. "Ad singulas Portas quae sunt hodie numero XXXVII ita ut XII portae semel numerentur."

worn away with kissing,* just as St Peter's toe is now.†

At present Rome has sixteen gates, including the four of the Citta Leonina, but several of them have been walled up.

By far the finest of them is the Porta Maggiore. This noble monument of Roman architecture, though now converted into a gate of the modern city, was originally an arch of the Aqueduct of Claudius, restored by Vespasian and Titus, and constructed with extraordinary elevation and embellishment, as was usual when Aqueducts crossed the public way. This fact is proved by a triple inscription which it still bears, commemorating its erection by the first, and its restoration by the two last, named of these emperors. This noble arch is built of immense squares of Tiburtine stone, joined together without cement, and supported by Ionic pillars of proportionate solidity. Like almost every building of antiquity at Rome, it seems to have been used as a fortress in the disastrous ages of feudal warfare.

The ancient Porta Flaminia on the north is now supplied by the Porta del Popolo; the Porta Capena on the south by the Porta San Sebastiano; the Porta Salara on the east alone retains *one* of its ancient names, for it had several. It was the Porta Salaria, *alias* Collina, *alias* Quirinalis, *alias*

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* Vide Lucr. l. i. v. 318.

† The toe of the brazen statue of the saint in his church, is the grand object of devotion among the modern Romans.

Agonensis, *alias* Scelerata, or rascally gate, which appellation it derived from the Campus Sceleratus, a piece of ground situated a little beyond it, in which the vestal virgins, who had violated their vows, were buried alive.

Livy, I think, invariably calls this gate the Porta Collina.

It was to this gate that Hannibal rode, attended by two thousand guards, to reconnoitre the wall and defences of the city he destined for destruction, and it was through this gate that Alaric, by the treachery of its guards, entered the city at midnight on the 24th of August A. D. 410, when Rome was for the third time sacked by an army of Goths.

On the west of Rome, the Porta San Paola, which is the substitute for the Porta Ostiensis, still, as formerly, leads to Ostia, and through it Genseric, at the head of his Vandals, after landing at that port from Africa, entered Rome the 15th June, A. D. 455, and was encountered,—not by a Roman army,—but by Pope Leo the Great, at the head of a procession of priests.* The ancient mistress of the world, the invincible conqueror of other nations, had now to trust for her own security to prayers, not to arms, and humbly to beseech the pity of the barbarian. In vain: the unceasing plunder of fourteen days and nights, the spoil of temples and of palaces, the flames of houses, the shrieks of their murdered inmates, and the

* Vide Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. vi.

groans of a people led away into slavery, attested his remorseless vengeance.

In consequence of the extension of the walls, all the gates of Rome are now removed, more or less, beyond their ancient situation.

The Porta Capena, which led to the Via Appia, is supposed to have stood near the little church of St Nereo ed Achilleo;* and the Flaminian gate, within the modern Corso, and so of all the rest.

The Porta Pia was once the Porta Nomentana, through which the Roman people twice retreated to the Sacred Mount, when oppressed by their rulers; and through which Nero fled from the vengeance of the people he had oppressed.

The Porta San Lorenzo, which was probably the ancient Porta Tiburtina, still leads to Tivoli, the ancient Tibur.

The Porta San Giovanni, now the great entrance from Naples, nearly corresponds to the ancient Porta Celimontana; between it and the Porta San Sebastiano was the Porta Latina, now blocked up.

Close to the Porta San Giovanni, and on the right of it as you leave Rome, you see the now blocked up Porta Asinaria, which was betrayed to Totila by the perfidy of the Isaurian centinels who guarded it, and through it he made his dreaded

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* The first Roman mile-stone on the Appian way, was found in a vineyard about a hundred yards beyond the present Porta San Sebastiano. A mile measured back from the spot where it was discovered, terminates at the church of St Nereo ed Achilleo.

entrance into Rome, when the wretched inhabitants, after having experienced the last extremities of famine, felt the *mercy* of the barbarian.

Gibbon relates, that at break of day he knelt before the tomb of St Peter; and while in the act of praying before the altar of the God of Mercy, eighty-five Romans were butchered by his command in the portico of the church. Rome was pillaged. "The sons and daughters of Roman consuls wandered in tattered garments through the streets, and begged their bread, perhaps without success, before the gates of their hereditary mansions."*

Still was his rage unsatiated against "the city that had so long delayed the course of his victories." Already was the fatal command issued, "that Rome should be turned into a pasture for cattle,"—that the plough should pass over her proud fabrics:—already was the torch lighted, and the combustibles prepared, that were to consume the splendours of antiquity; when the warning voice of Belisarius called on his victorious enemy, "Not to sully his fame by the destruction of those monuments which were the glory of the dead, and the delight of the living."† Totila listened to the admonition of a rival, and Rome was preserved.

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* Gibbon, Decline and Fall.

† Ibid.

LETTER XIV.

"But I will sing above all monuments,
Seven Roman hills—the world's seven wonderments*

Rome was always the City of the Seven Hills. They were held sacred, and a festival was annually celebrated in December, called the Dies Septimontium.† Indeed, I must say that the ancient Romans seem to have been quite as fond of idleness, or diversion, under the name of religion, as the modern Italians, and that they had as many *festas* in these days as they have now. But this has nothing to do with the hills—

——— "these Seven Hills—which be now
Tombs of her greatness which did threat the sky."‡

I would, however, advise you not to raise your expectations of them too high. My ideas were far too towering. I had unconsciously formed a kind of notion that their magnitude must be proportioned to their fame—which, to be sure, was about as reasonable as if one should expect that a man of great

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* Spenser's Ruins of Rome.

† Vide Varso.—De Ling. Lat. lib. 5. Dies Septimontium ab his septem montibus in quies sita urbs est.

‡ Spenser's Ruins of Rome.

celebrity must necessarily be taller than his neighbours.

So far from being hills of extraordinary elevation, however, I have even had my doubts whether some of them can be called hills at all. I think they should rather be called *banks* or *braes*, not so much because they are little, as because they have an ascent on one side only. The Palatine, the Aventine, the Capitol, and even the Cœlian, are indeed legitimate, if not lofty mounts; but the Esquiline and the Quirinal, though they certainly boast a pretty considerable rise on the side of Rome, have no fall on the opposite side, as far as I can discover. As for the Viminal Hill, I have never yet been able to find it at all, though I have made a most diligent search after it. Nor is it invisible to my eyes only, for I have never yet been so fortunate as to meet with any one hardy enough to maintain that he had himself seen it, though some believe in it, and all talk of it with due respect, as if it were still in existence; whereas it is, in truth, a deceased mount; and not only dead, but buried. The fall of the ruins from the Esquiline and Quirinal Hills, between which it was situated, together with that of its own buildings, has interred it with them in one common grave.

Let us, however, ascend all that now remain of the Seven Hills of Ancient Rome; and while from their summit we recal all the works of magnificence and fame that once overspread them, let us bestow one glance on the aspect they now present to the eye of a stranger, whose far distant pilgrimage has been made to visit them.

The Palatine Hill, to which we must first direct our steps, is now, as it was anciently, square; and its circumference, or rather its quadrangle,—for it has four corners,—is said to be a full mile.

With all my respect for this venerable mount, I must say that it is very little. I had previously been disappointed in the lowly height of the Capitol; but I stood yet more amazed at the square, flat-topped, and dwarfish elevation of the Palatine. It must certainly have been materially degraded by the fall of the successive generations of buildings which have stood on it, from the straw-roofed cottages of Romulus and his *Roma Quadrata*, to the crumbling erections of Popes and Cardinals. The ruins of these multifarious edifices, heaped up round its base, have raised the surface at least twenty feet above the ancient level; still, with all the allowances one can make, it must originally have been very little of a hill indeed.

It is not, therefore, in any respect to its appearance that we owe the sensations of admiration and undying interest with which we regard it. It is, that every step we tread here is big with recollections—for it was the scene of early glory, the spot where Rome grew into greatness and fell into decay—where those immortal spirits lived and acted who have been, through successive ages, the luminaries of the earth, and where the light first dawned of that freedom and civilization which still sheds its brightness through the world. That spot which once comprized the whole of Rome, which, till the extinction of the republic, contained the dwellings of her senators, and the temples of her

gods, but which, during the empire, was found to be too circumscribed for the wants of one individual, is now heaped with the wide-spreading ruins of that magnificent edifice which was the abode of her tyrants, and the tomb of her liberties.

Over the wide expanse of the Palatine,—successively peopled with a race of warlike kings, with the orators, the philosophers, and the heroes of the republic, and with the crowded population of an imperial court—no human dwelling or habitation is now to be seen, except where one solitary convent shelters a few bare-footed friars, and where, amid the ruined arches and buried halls of the Palace of the Cæsars, the labourers of the vineyards and kitchen gardens that now flourish over them, have made their wretched abodes.

But let us look back from the melancholy desolation of its present state to earlier times.

The history of the Palatine Hill is an epitome of that of civilized society. From the days when Romulus encompassed it with a plough-share, and raised upon it the humble sheds of his followers, and the straw-roofed cottage of their chief, it progressively advanced through the stages of convenience, embellishment, and splendour, till it reached the extreme of luxury and magnificence in the *Domus Aurea* of Nero. From that period, it gradually declined to its last degenerate state of ruin, and has now become once more deserted.

A fanciful mind might say, that before the Romans it exhibited the pastoral age; in their early times, the iron age; in the close of the republic, and dawn of the empire, the golden age; and, for

many a century back, the age of brass, the last and worst

Besides a brief account in two folio volumes, of the early history of the Palatine Hill, many long and learned treatises have been written on the fruitful subject of its etymology. Whether it took its name from Pales, the goddess of sheep, who used to tend her flocks here, or from Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, or from Pallas, the great-grandfather of Evander, or from Palas, an Arcadian town, or from Palatium, a city in the territory of Reate, (which was one of the many places that sent a colony to this hill,) or from Palantes, which bore allusion to the wandering tribes that dwelt upon it, I leave you to decide; settle it exactly as you like best.

Again, as we are upon the head of etymology, I must beg you to remember, that, having derived its own name from—something, it certainly gave the name of Palatium to the habitation of the Kings of Rome, from whence the name of palace, in all European languages.

Though the year in which Rome was founded is disputed, the day is correctly ascertained.* It was the 21st of April, and in commemoration of it, the *Palilia*, or festival of the pastoral goddess, Pales, continued to be celebrated as long as the Kings, the Consuls, or the Emperors of the Romans held their ancient seat in the Palatine; for it was not till the government was removed to Byzantium,

* Vide Livy, lib. 1.

and Christianity was established in the land by Constantine, that this festival was discontinued.

Vainly should we now look for the *Velia* where the house of Publicola stood, or for the *Sub Velia* beneath it, scarcely less famed in the annals of the republic. The former is conjectured to have been that summit of the Palatine Hill between the Churches of St Theodore and S. Anastasio, and the latter, a sloping descent which led down from thence to the Velabrum. As vainly should we look for the Lupercal, which must have been on this north side of the mount, or for any traces of all the temples, the altars, the porticos, and the multifarious buildings that stood here before the days of Augustus—or seek to discover the vanished sites of the houses of the Gracchi, of Hortensius, of Crassus, of Clodius, of Catiline, and of Cicero,—whose house, you may remember, was destroyed on his exile, through the successful cabal of Clodius, rebuilt by the Senate on his triumphant return, and again confiscated after his murder.* It seems to have been situated on the highest part of the hill; but fancy vainly essays to pitch upon the spot where it stood. All the structures, and even the natural features of the hill, were swept away with the ruins of the republic, to make way for the dwellings of the Master of the World; and the eye now vainly wanders over vast masses of broken walls, choked up with rubbish; unable, amidst its desolation, to form any picture of what once existed here.

* Vide Middleton's Life, and Plutarch's Life of Cicero.

I have made repeated visits to this hill; I have spent whole days upon it; I have been there with the most renowned antiquaries, professional and unprofessional; I have read and thought, and enquired about it, and all I have gained by puzzling my own brains, and those of other people, is the simple fact I knew at first—that it is covered with the walls of the Palace of the Cæsars, in confused and undistinguishable ruin, and that all attempts to investigate or comprehend their plan or detail, must now prove wholly fruitless.

Some antiquaries don't seem to be of this opinion; they have made plans upon plans of the Imperial Palace; completely finished, even to the pantries, with no assistance but a few broken walls and their own imaginations; and all of these, though as unlike as possible to each other, probably bear an equal resemblance to the original. But perhaps it may not be altogether uninteresting, before we examine the ruins of this prodigious edifice, to bestow a moment's attention on the ordinary plan of the houses of the Romans, which it is easy to form a tolerably correct idea of, partly from the description of Vitruvius, and partly from the investigation of the ruins of Pompeii.*

Whatever may have been the variations from the general mode of building—and no doubt they were numerous—there are three parts which seem to have been common to every Roman house of any

* This letter, though inserted here, was not written till after the author's return from Naples.

importance. These were, the vestibule, the atrium, and the cavædium.

The vestibule was a spacious open space, or portico, before the door, where the patrician took his morning's walk, and received the solicitations of his clients or dependants, a practice to which Cicero often alludes. Then followed the atrium, or portico, a large hall, into which the sleeping rooms and servants' rooms looked. Beyond this was the cavædium, an open court, generally surrounded by a covered portico, into which the eating rooms, the baths, the library,—when there was one,—and all the principal rooms of the family opened; and in the centre of which there was generally a fountain. In the country, and in small towns, the houses were generally of one storey; and the rooms, if they were lighted at all, were lighted from the top; but many of the little rooms at Pompeii seem to have received light only from the door.

In Rome, and other large cities, the houses consisted of several stories, and frequent laws were made to restrict their height, which Augustus limited to seventy feet, a proof that they must have sometimes exceeded it. It is obvious that such houses, unless the apartments were left in total darkness, must have been lighted with windows like ours. Yet many of the antiquaries of Rome will not allow that any Roman houses had windows; and loud and long are the battles that have been waged upon this head.

It is certain that the generality of the houses of Pompeii have no windows, but neither have they

now any roofs; therefore the light may have been admitted through the roofs, as they are, for the most part, only one story in height. In like manner, in the remains of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, there are no windows; but we must remember that, in the first place, the rooms may also have been lighted from the top; and, secondly, that this palace was any thing but Roman. It was Greek, Egyptian, and Asiatic. It was copied from all the buildings of all the countries Hadrian had visited in his travels; so that it is not a case in point; and even if he chose to live in the dark, it is no proof that his subjects did. Besides, there may have been windows in the Villa Adriana, for a very small part of it now remains, even in ruin; and there certainly are windows in one of the great halls in the Baths of Caracalla.

This indeed is mere idle speculation. We know, whatever the antiquaries may say to the contrary, that the Romans had windows in their houses. Cicero would not have defended the smallness of the windows in his new house in the Palatine, from the censure of his friend Atticus;* Pliny would not have enumerated all the windows in all the apartments of all his villas;† and, above all, Tibullus‡ would never have commemorated the fate of the poor woman that fell out of a window into the street, if there had been no such things.

* Middleton's Life of Cicero, vol. I. p. 302, edit. 8vo. Lond. 1742.

† Epist. lib. ii. Ep. 17. and lib. v. Ep. 6.

‡ Lib. ii. Eleg. 7.

Besides, among the paintings found at Herculaneum, I observed one in which the houses were represented with windows; and at Pompeii there are several instances of windows.

Vitruvius, too, I have forgot where, speaks of houses which had windows from the cieling to the floor; and, in another place, recommends a great deal of light to country houses.

Some antiquaries, again, who allow the Romans windows, refuse them glass, or any substitute for it, and suppose that all winter, when it was cold, they sate in the dark.

If I mistake not, the younger Pliny, in his minute account of his Laurentinum Villa, says that the windows are glazed (admit light, and exclude air;) nor does he seem to mention it as a very unusual circumstance. He also notices a room in the garden with a glass door.

Winkelman* mentions a Roman painting, supposed to be of the age of Constantine, which represented a great number of houses with windows, all of which were glazed. This painting was enchased in the wall of the Casino Cesi; but the Prince Pamfili had it white-washed over, quite clean!

However, it would seem that the art of glazing windows was not of very ancient date, since Seneca speaks of it as one of those not discovered till about his own time;† and Vopiscus, in his Life of

* Observations sur L'Architecture des Anciens, 70.

† Epist. 90. Seneca.

Aurelian, mentions glass windows as a luxury; so that they must, even at that late period, have been used only by the opulent. Still this is sufficient to prove that they were known; and indeed the quantity not only of broken glass vessels, but of glass in plates, found at Herculaneum, is an indisputable proof, if proof were necessary, that the ancients understood the art of making glass plates; and, when made, it is really quite incredible that they should never have thought of putting them into their windows.

It appears, however, that a semi-transparent stone, called lapis specularis, was more early, and more generally used for the purpose of glazing windows.* It separated into thin plates, or laminæ, and seems to have been a species of talc. Pliny says it chiefly came from Spain, and adds, that bee-hives were sometimes made of it, in order that the habits of those insects might be observed by the curious; † so that we are to suppose that the ancients gave their bees windows, while they denied them to themselves! Indeed, according to the antiquaries, the houses of the ancients must have been most uncomfortable places, for they not only refuse them glass windows, but chimneys. They pretend that they warmed themselves

* It would appear that curtains only, instead of the *specularia*, were sometimes used to close the aperture of windows, or rather, perhaps, the curtains were used to shade the sun; the specularia to exclude the cold and admit the light. "Neque specularia, neque vita, quæ frigoris causa, vel umbræ, in domo sunt."—*Ulpian.*

† Pliny, lib. 21, c. 14. Hist. Nat.

and dressed their food *entirely* by means of braziers filled with ignited charcoal, set in the middle of the room—a very common, unwholesome, and disagreeable custom in the south of Italy, to this day—and one which I make no doubt the ancients, as well as the moderns, practised. But I also think that they, as well as the moderns, had chimneys too, and fires. Horace, in that ode you used to be so fond of, tells them to heap on plenty of wood, to make a blazing fire;* and he complains bitterly of a smoaky chimney in his journey to Brundusium.

Besides, the hearth was always considered the sacred seat of hospitality, and guarded by the household gods themselves. Did not Coriolanus place himself upon it when he sought the protection of Tullus Aufidius?†

It is also stated, that many of the proscribed victims of the Triumvirate hid themselves in chimneys during the search that was made after them.

That there are no fire-places to be seen in the remains of Pompeii, is no objection, because the mildness of the climate of Magna Græcia,—for which the luxurious Romans sought its happy shores,—renders firing wholly unnecessary, even in winter. Even to this day, there is scarcely a fire-place in the house of a Neapolitan.‡ But the win-

* "Dissolve frigus; ligna super foco
Largé reponens."—Lib. i. Ode 9.

† Plutarch.—Life of M. T. Coriolanus.

‡ During the whole of the winter months which we passed at Naples, we had no fire.

ter climate of Rome, on the contrary, was *then* very different to what it is now, as the falls of snow, the frosts, and the freezing of the Tiber itself, mentioned by ancient writers, sufficiently prove.

But all these disquisitions—and you must have found them sufficiently tiresome—will assist us little in tracing the wide-spread ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, in which there are neither doors nor windows, nor chimneys nor fire-places, nor roofs nor floors. We see, indeed, that it must have had three stories, and we know that it possessed numerous vestibules, atria, cavædia, &c. communicating by long corridors; filled with baths, and banqueting-rooms, and fountains, and tennis-courts; surrounded with gardens, and theatres, and hippodromes, and gymnasia; and abounding in every incentive to luxury and voluptuousness.

Augustus was the founder of the Palace of the Cæsars. He comprised within his own habitation the house of Hortensius, of Cicero, and of some other of the victims of that bloody proscription which sealed the last Triumvirate.

That he built one house is certain, and according to some antiquaries, he built two; for the first, it seems, was struck by lightning, and as the ancients considered a building on which the thunderbolt of Jove had descended, as for ever sacred to that god, he was obliged to resign it to him; but whether he gave up the whole, or only that part of it which the Thunderer had chosen—whether he built a distinct house for himself, or only enlarged the former one, so as to enable both himself and

Jupiter to live together in it; history is silent, and the antiquaries are at variance; and, for my own part, I am ignorant.

It is universally agreed, however, that the house, or houses of Augustus, far outshone in splendour all that had been seen before in Rome, although, towards the close of the republic, luxury had made such rapid strides, that the accounts we read of the number and splendour of the villas of private citizens, of Pompey, Crassus, Lucullus, and Cicero, would seem incredible, if their very ruins did not, even to this day, attest that, in extent and in magnificence, they must have surpassed the palaces of modern princes.*

Yet such was the artful policy of Augustus, and so much did he affect the seeming moderation of a Roman citizen, that he pretended this magnificent dwelling was not for himself, but for the habitation of the Pontifex Maximus, well knowing that he would be chosen for that august office.

It was the boast of Augustus, "that he found Rome of brick, and left it of marble;" and, perhaps, to the degenerate Romans, that proved a sufficient compensation for his finding Rome free, and leaving it enslaved.

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* On the shore of the Bay of Baiæ, and of Molo di Gæeta. These stupendous remains of patrician villas are a curious contrast to the plebeian houses of Pompeii, where the rooms are like closets. The Library at Herculaneum, in which the whole of the volumes, now unrolling, were found, was so small, that a man, with outstretched arms, could measure its dimensions either way.

The house of Augustus was in the north-west* part of the Palatine, looking down on the *Pulchrum Littus*, "the beautiful shore" near the Tiber, and supposed to be on the spot formerly occupied by the straw-roofed cottage of Romulus, which had long since disappeared.

Not satisfied with the splendid dwelling of his predecessor, Tiberius built himself a house on the north side of the Palatine, looking into the Velabrum. Caligula, though he had the two houses of the two preceding Emperors, built himself two more; one on the north-east corner of the Palatine, fronting the Capitol, and the other on the Capitoline Hill itself; and these he connected together by a bridge† thrown across the Forum, which

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* The antiquaries are all at cross purposes about the respective situations of the Emperor's houses. Bianchini, who wrote a large folio on the subject, and spent his whole life in making plans of the Palace of the Cæsars, and yet died before he finished them, makes the house of Augustus front the Cœlian; that of Tiberius, the Roman Forum; and that of Caligula, the Velabrum. The account I have given is that generally received, and has been deduced from Suetonius, Tacitus, and a multitude of ancient authors—the discussion of which totally exhausted my patience, and would, I am sure, prove far too much for yours.

† Building bridges seems to have been one of Caligula's favourite manias; for he actually threw one over the wide expanse of the Bay of Baiæ, the pretended ruins of which are still shown at Puzzioli, by the Lazzaroni Ciceroni there. These remains, however, are of stone, and Caligula's bridge was made of boats or ships, anchored, fastened together, and

Claudius, though not very wise himself, had sense enough to pull down, as well as the house on the Capitol.

Then came Nero and built himself a house, which he called Transitoria, and burnt it down, and Rome along with it; and erected in the Domus Aurea, a palace, such as the world never saw. Not content with covering the whole of the Palatine with his Golden House, he extended its gardens, groves, porticos, and pleasure-grounds, over the whole plain south of the Forum, and even upon the Esquiline and Cœlian Hills.

The Coliseum occupies the site of the largest of those lakes made by Nero in his gardens, which Tacitus describes in such glowing colours; but which,—judging from the confined space there is to divide among so many courts, corridors, halls, and theatres; woods, waters, hills, and dales,—could have been nothing better than "fish-ponds deep." Indeed, we are puzzled to find room for them on the most limited scale, when we compare the ground with the description of the historian.

"On the ruins of his native country, Nero erected a palace, in which the profusion of gold and

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covered with earth.* Indeed, the freak never would have lasted long enough to have built it of more durable materials, even if it had been practicable. The ruins which bear the name of his bridge, seem to have formed a part of the mole constructed by Augustus, when he formed the Julian harbour, and let the sea into the Lucrine and Avernian Lakes.

* Vide Suetonius, in Vita Calig.

precious stones did not raise the chief admiration, for these were ornaments that widely-diffused luxury had rendered common; but universal astonishment was excited by its spacious glades, and large artificial lakes—by its thick woods and shades, like vast wildernesses—by its ample lawns and avenues, and far-extended prospects."*

But we must remember that the word *lacus* was applied by the Romans to every piece of still water, however small; nay, even to the vases or reservoirs of fountains. For example, Pliny says Agrippa made lacus DCC,† a number of lakes which would certainly have inundated Rome, if they had been any thing larger than the basins of fountains. Sextus Rufus, and Victor, enumerate *lacus* LXXXIII in the first of the fourteen regions of Rome, and a proportionate number in the rest, and it is obvious that such is their signification. The *lakes* of Nero's golden house, therefore, may for the most part have been very small ponds of water, or even reservoirs of fountains; but the principal one, which was drained to make way for the immense circumference of the Flavian Amphitheatre, is described by Suetonius as "like a sea."

It is said, that Vespasian at the same time pulled down all that Nero had erected beyond the Palatine,‡ reducing the Imperial Palace to the hill that

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* Ann. Tac. lib. xv.

† Pliny, lib. xxxvi. cap. 15. and Nardini, lib. iii. cap. 4.

‡ It is singular, that Suetonius, who records the draining of this lake, makes no mention of the destruction of any part of the palace.

once contained Rome; and that he built the stupendous Amphitheatre, the Temple of Peace, and the Baths of Titus, out of the materials of this portion of the Domus Aurea. Bricks, however, could not have been converted into Tibertine stone; and the whole of Nero's palace was of the former, but the exterior of the Coliseum is of the latter.

Domitian began to build up what his predecessors had pulled down, and added to the palace the Adonea, or hall and gardens of Adonis, the surpassing splendour of which even excited the astonishment of that age of magnificence. This celebrated building was still standing in the time of Severus, for we see it marked on one of the fragments of the marble plan of Rome, executed in his reign.

On the south of the Palatine, Septimus Severus made several additions, particularly the Septizonium, a building which stood at the south-west corner of the hill, and nearly at its base; not so far from it as the Church of St Gregory. By some the Septizonium was believed to be an entrance to the palace; by others a mausoleum; by many, neither; but though its destination was dubious, its beauty was certain; and that beauty proved its destruction; for Sixtus V. fell in love with the three complete orders of marble columns of which it was composed, carried them off to St Peter's, and utterly demolished this beautiful relic of antiquity.

In the southern part of the palace, about a hundred and fifty years ago, a room full of Roman coins was discovered, and a magnificent hall hung with

cloth of gold, which fell into dust as soon as the air was admitted. The coins, of course, were carried off, and both chambers filled up.

About a hundred years ago, a hall forty feet in length was discovered on the Palatine, the walls of which were entirely covered with paintings. They were taken off, crammed into a box, and sent to Naples with the rest of the invaluable and ill-fated specimens of ancient art that fell into the hands of the Farnese family, and there they were permitted to lie, mouldering in the damp cellars, until every vestige of the paintings had disappeared.*

Many other chambers have at different times been discovered on the Palatine; but after being rifled of their marble columns, their pavements, their statues, and their precious ornaments, they have all been filled up again.

The fall of the Palace of the Cæsars, like that of almost every other remains of antiquity, was less the work of foreign barbarians than of the Romans themselves.

The Goths, in the fifth century, pillaged it of its gold, its silver, its ivory, and most of its portable treasures. Genseric seized its bronze, and all its remaining precious metals; and the shipload of statues which the capricious Vandal sent to Africa, was supposed to consist chiefly of the plunder of the Imperial Palace.

The troops of Belisarius lodged in it; so also

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* Winkelman sur l'Architecture, chap. ii. 27.

did the soldiers of Totila during his second occupation of Rome; but that is no proof of its destruction; on the contrary, the spoils of modern excavations have proved how vast were the treasures of art and magnificence which had been spared, or despised, by their forbearance or ignorance: and however the interior splendour of the Palace of the Cæsars might suffer by their barbarian inmates, we know, at least, that its immense exterior, its courts and corridors, and walls, and roofs, and pavements, were in perfect preservation at a much later period; for in the days of Heraclius,* it was still fit to receive a royal guest; and it appears to have been entire in the eighth century, from the mention made of it by Anastasius.

In the long feudal wars of the Roman nobles during the barbarous ages, its ruin began. It was attacked and fortified, taken and retaken, and for a length of time was the central fortress of the Frangipani family, who possessed a chain of redoubts around it, erected on the ruins of Rome.

But its final destruction was consummated by the Farnese popes and princes, who laboriously destroyed its ruins to build up their palaces and villas with the materials; buried these magnificent halls beneath their wretched gardens, and erected upon them the hideous summer-houses and grottos, the deformity of which still impeaches the taste of their architect, Michael Angelo Buonarotti.

* The beginning of the seventh century.

To the remains in this part of the Palatine Hill, our first visit was directed.

Turning from the arch of Titus up a narrow road, lined with the ruins of the palace walls, we entered the Farnese gardens, which present a curious picture of ancient grandeur and existing wretchedness. The casinos of popes mouldering upon the palaces of Roman emperors—pigs and peasants inhabiting a corner of these splendid ruins —cabbages and artichokes flourishing above them —fragments of precious marbles and granites, of carved cornices and broken alabaster, scattered amongst the mould,—while the eye wanders over a confused array of long corridors, nameless arcades, unknown vaults, forgotten chambers, and broken arches.

We stand here on the level of the second story of the palace, or palaces; for antiquaries still affect to point out the different buildings of different emperors; and according to their account, all that Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula, ever erected, survived the conflagration of Nero. On the north-east corner of the Palatine, fronting to the Capitol, they shew you the house of Caligula, which is now a rope walk; and further along the north side, they conduct you to the house of Tiberius, though there is no visible division or distinction between them. The house of Tiberius is, however, mentioned in the reign of Galba,* and subsequently we hear that Antoninus Pius made it his residence.

* Tacitus, Hist. lib. i.

We left the Emperor's houses to follow an old woman who had been screaming to us for some time in the usual ear-piercing tones of Roman females, and crossing a field of artichokes, descended a long flight of steps into two subterranean chambers, which have once been baths of the Imperial Palace, but which, though adorned with much magnificence, could never have possessed the blessings of either light or air. By the glimmering of some wax tapers, we saw the gilded ceiling of these splendid dungeons still shining in the passing ray, and painted with figures designed with exquisite taste and correctness. By the old woman, these chambers were called the Baths of Livia; by the antiquary, the Baths of Tiberius; and as there is not the shadow of a reason for either name, I shall choose the old woman's, as the more general designation. Whatever baths they were anciently, I can aver, that they still answer the purpose of baths tolerably well; being so damp, that the water poured down copiously upon our heads; and in endeavouring to avoid these streams from above, we plunged up to the ankles into an unseen pool on the floor, by which our ardour for the fine arts, and more especially for ancient paintings, was so effectually cooled, that we made all imaginable haste to upper day, and the warm beams of an Italian sun.

On the height of the southern extremity of the Farnese gardens, beneath a grove of aged ilex, whose dark evergreen shade contrasts beautifully with the whiteness of the Parian marble, lie the

broken columns, overthrown capitals, and beautiful sculpture of an ancient temple, supposed to have been that magnificent Temple of Apollo built by Augustus after the battle of Actium, to the god to whose influence he ascribed the victory. The naval trophies, the dolphins and the hyppogriff, which are still sculptured on the marble, would seem to place its identity beyond dispute; but with antiquaries nothing is indisputable, and some of them call it, in the very teeth of the hyppogriff, the Temple of Neptune.

It happens that Propertius, in describing the Temple of the Palatine Apollo, mentions, that the tympanum was adorned with a bas relief of the battle of the Amazons; and on a fragment of the marble which still lies beneath the ilex trees, we saw the figure of an Amazon combating with an Athenian. We are therefore, I think, justified in concluding these to have been remains of the Temple of the Palatine Apollo.

It was encircled with an exterior portico, formed of columns of Giallo Antico;* but every part of the temple itself was composed of Parian marble, the beauty of which is still apparent, even in its shattered remains.

Beneath the statue of the god which stood in the cella, were placed the Sybilline books, which were removed thither from the Temple of Jupiter Capi-

* A beautiful ancient marble, of a bright yellow ground, variously veined, found in great quantity among the ruins of Rome.

tolinus by Augustus,* for it was a part of his artful policy to make himself master of the most sacred public deposits. In the area in front of the temple stood the famous Grecian colossal statue of Apollo, brought from Tarentum. In these days the Romans did not imitate the example of that Republican conqueror, who, being asked at the taking of Tarentum if he would not carry off its masterpieces of sculpture and painting to Rome, contemptuously exclaimed, "Let us leave the Tarentines their angry gods!"

Lastly, but not the least among its treasures, this temple possessed the famous Palatine Library, where poets used to recite their rival compositions.

On this very spot, I found, to my great delight, some leaves of the acanthus growing wild, and contrasting their native luxuriance with their sculptured forms clustering round the fallen Corinthian capitals at my feet, I scarcely knew whether most to admire the perfection of art in the imitation, or the taste which first adopted it as an architectural ornament.

The well known origin of the invention, the chance by which Callimachus beheld its growing leaves bursting through the neglected basket, could

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* Vide Suetonius, who also mentions that the three *ancient* Sybilline books, which Tarquin purchased of the Sybil herself, were burnt in the Capitol during the Marsic war, after which ambassadors were sent to every quarter to collect authentic oracles of the Sybil, to remedy the disaster as far as possible; and these volumes contained this second compilation or edition.

only have been seized and improved upon by a mind alive to beauty, as were those of the ancient artists of Greece. The small minute leaf of the olive, which was afterwards introduced in Corinthian capitals, is far inferior in effect, and the coarse shapeless leaves of aquatic plants only came into use in the latter ages, when nothing better could be executed.

But all the ancient Corinthian columns of the ruins of Rome are adorned with the graceful foliage of the acanthus. This plant grows wild in many parts of Italy, but never flowers except on the southern shores of Magna Græcia.

It was a favourite ornament in Roman gardens, and possibly the very leaves we now gathered may have sprung from the natural offspring of those plants which once adorned the grounds of the Palace of the Cæsars.

The remains of the Temple of Cybele, built by Livia, are stated to have stood upon the Palatine so late as the seventeenth century.

The first temple in Rome dedicated to that common mother, was built during the second Punic War,* but afterwards destroyed.

A tremendous catalogue of temples on this mount, even in the imperial age, is given by various writers; amongst which are the temples of various Fortunes and Jupiters, of two or three Junos, of Victory (in general,) and German Victory (in par-

* Livy, Dec. 3. lib. xxix. c. 37.—A. U. 548.

ticular,) of the gods of the Cæsars, of Augustus and Heliogabalus, of Fever, of Bacchus, of Minerva, of Orcus (or Pluto,) of the Luna Noctiluca, which shone by night, and of Viriplaca, a goddess, for whom, as I understand she presided over matrimonial reconciliations, I have too great a respect, to pass over in silence.

We left the "Orti Farnesiani," which little deserve their name, for they boast not a single shrub or flower,—not even

> "A rose of the wilderness left on its stalk
> To mark where a garden had been"—

and proceeded up the narrow gloomy lane leading to the convent. It is a Via Crucis, lined with the pictured representations of Christ's fourteen stages beneath the Cross. It was well observed to me, that the way now sacred to the Redeemer of the world had once been trodden by its destroyers; that he, being God, condescended to become man; that they, being men, exalted themselves to Gods; and that the strain of incense now breathed here to *him*, who in mercy shed his precious blood to save human kind, was once raised on this very spot to those ruthless tyrants, who in wanton barbarity sacrificed millions to glut their diabolical passion for torture and cruelty.

After our patience had been exercised for nearly half an hour in battering an old wooden gate, we were admitted into the grounds of what, by courtesy, is called the Villa Magnani, formerly the Villa

Spada; but no villa whatever is to be seen; and the tumbling-down summer-houses, and the gardens—if weeds and cabbages deserve such a name—are still more wretched than those of the Farnese which we had just left.

There is nothing worth looking at except a suite of chambers under ground, to which we descended by a flight of, I think, above forty steps. It is scarcely half a century since they were excavated by an Englishman, who has placed an inscription in them, declaring them consecrated to the fine arts. We found them filled with casks of wine.

Their form and architecture are beautiful. They are known by the name of the Baths of Nero, but have no appearance of having been baths. Some of the antiquaries call them Cœnacula, or eating-rooms of the house of Augustus,* and others confess the real fact, that it is impossible to know what they were.

The frescos of the ruinous Casino in these grounds are falsely ascribed to Raphael.

From hence we drove round the southern base of the Palatine along the line of the Via Triumphalis, passed under the arches built in prolongation of Nero's Aqueduct, which carried it from the brink of the Cœlian Mount into the Imperial Pa-

* These rooms are, however, on the south side of the hill, and the house of Augustus is generally stated to have been on the north-west. We must be content to rest assured that they formed a part of the Imperial Palace. All else is mere supposition.

lace, said to be the erection of Septimius Severus; and from the west side of the Palatine, entered the ruins of the Golden House by a steep, narrow, dirty staircase, ill suited to the ancient splendour of such a mansion; and making our way through a quantity of sheds, pig-sties, and cabbage heaps, we climbed up the ruins by long flights of *vilely* modern steps, adorned with clay crucifixions.

The terrace at the top is on the corridors of Nero's palace, and was once the pavement of the third story. Immediately below it is the Circus Maximus, which occupied the whole valley between the Palatine and the Aventine; and though all traces of the building have disappeared, its form is still very apparent.

At one end of the terrace is a sort of balcony, called, in popular language, the Gabinetto di Nerone, from whence he (Nero) is said to have viewed the games, and given the signal for their commencement by throwing the napkin.

Near it is a little round place which goes by the truly ridiculous name of the Bath of Seneca, in which, we are gravely assured, that philosopher bled to death; but that it never could have been a bath, and that it may perchance have been a staircase, is sufficiently evident from the bare inspection of it.

But a building, if it be round, is always called either a bath or a temple; for instance, in the grounds below the terrace, amidst a heap of other nameless ruins, are the remains of a beautiful circular building, which the old woman who enlight-

ens the understanding of strangers with her antiquarian lore, denominates the Temple of Apollo, or sometimes, by way of variety, of Vesta, but which, in all probability, never was any temple whatever. It is very evident that it has formed a part of the palace, but we should find it difficult to give it a satisfactory name.

At the extremity of the terrace, the Palace of Nero joins that part of the ruins which antiquaries generally call the House of Augustus, which also fronts towards the Circus Maximus and the Aventine; occupying the more northern part of the west side of the Palatine. At this point, we looked down into a large open space surrounded by walls, called the Hippodrome of Augustus, which we afterwards visited, but there is very little further to be seen. In the centre of one side is a semi-circular recess, which possibly may have been the balcony from whence the emperor and his court used to view the equestrian exercises and other diversions exhibited here.*

I must not forget to tell you, that one great antiquary pronounced this balcony to be an odeum for music; and another assured me, that the Hippodrome was unquestionably—something he called

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* One of these was the martyrdom of St Sebastian, which, it is recorded, was executed here, in order that these refined and humane Romans might enjoy the spectacle of seeing darts and spears stuck into his naked body.

—the Mediarum of Heliogabalus, where that young monster used to amuse himself with making snow-balls in summer.

The sports of the imperial boy bear a curious similarity to those of the venerable Empress Catherine, who, it is well known, in her wisdom erected a palace of ice in her Russian gardens; so that, in the remotest ages and climates, "great princes" seem to have had the same "play-things."

The road from Rome to the Porta San Sebastiano passes close along the western side of the Palatine Hill. It is generally believed that this road is modern, and that anciently there was none here, because the Circus Maximus, and the shops which surrounded it, were built against the Palatine Hill. The Via Appia, to which it leads, (though not exactly in a direct line,) is believed to have had its commencement only at the Porta Capena.

Of the shops, or Tabernæ, which were attached to the Circus Maximus, and which bore no very respectable character, some remains may still be traced against the palace walls, in the form of low brick arches, built up, with modern doors in them. They are exactly on the left of the road in coming from Rome to the ruins of Nero's Golden House.

It was in these shops that the conflagration began, in the reign of Nero, that consumed ten out of fourteen quarters of the city, and was finally extinguished at the base of the Esquiline. It was in his own private theatre on that Mount that Nero,

during the progress of the flames, chanted the conflagration of Troy.*

We lingered for a long time on this noble terrace; and though its sides and extremity are wholly unguarded, its immense breadth is a sufficient safeguard, even against the feeling of insecurity. The polished myrtle, the laurustinus in full flower, the young bloom of the scorpion senna, and the gigantic leaves of the "everlasting aloe," flourish in wild profusion over these ruins.

This terrace commands a prospect that I could gaze at for ever with undiminished interest. The ruins of Rome amidst her ancient hills—the fallen

* Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. It would appear, that even then, Nero's palace extended from the Palatine to the Esquiline Hill; for Tacitus says, that when the conflagration began, Nero was at Antium, and never returned to the city till he heard the fire had advanced to that part of his house which filled the space between the palace (on the Palatine) and the gardens of Mecænas (on the Esquiline.)

The historian proves clearly, that the fire was raised by command of the Emperor. He says, "No man durst attempt to stop the progress of the flames, so dreadful were the menaces uttered against those who did so, while bands of incendiaries publicly heightened it by vollies of firebrands, exclaiming they were authorised to do so. At length on the sixth day the conflagration was stopped at the foot of Mount Esquiline by pulling down an immense number of buildings. But the fire broke out with fresh violence in different places; whence it was conjectured that Nero was aiming at building a new city, and calling it by his name. Of the fourteen quarters into which Rome was divided, four were still entire, three in utter ruin, and in the seven others, a few half-burnt houses were only to be seen."

grandeur of the Coliseum—the deserted shores of the Tiber—the wild and waste extent of the Campagna, marked with the long lines of broken aqueducts and mouldering tombs—the amphitheatre of mountains which sweep round the plain of Latium —every object that meets our view recals to us the times that are fled.

All the distant and romantic events of history are realized by the presence of the scenes in which they are acted; the long interval of ages is at once annihilated, and we seem to live, and move, and think, with those who have gone before us. Here, far from every sound and sight of man, and surrounded only with the ruined monuments of ancient greatness, I have indeed felt, that it is at Rome only we live more in the past than in the present.

The prodigious extent of the ruins of all ages which cover the wide extent of the Palatine itself, is not the least striking of the features of the scene. It almost seems, from the destruction which has overwhelmed every modern erection on this hill, as if the Genius of Rome, impatient at the profanation of her ancient seat, had struck them with her withering hand, and doomed all the works of man to perish here.

The distant view of the dome of St Peter's recalled us from the high heroic visions of early days, to a chapter in the history of mankind fraught with wonder and instruction; and as, standing on these ruins, which once contained the despot whom all the nations of the earth obeyed and worshipped, we looked to the Vatican, whose now innocuous

thunders had once shaken Europe, and hurled monarchs from their thrones,—we thought of the singular destiny of a city that had successively been the temporal and the spiritual tyrant of the world, and almost anticipated the day when that papal, like this imperial palace, would lie in ruins, and the dominion of the popes, like that of the emperors, be at an end for ever.

"Rome was the whole world—all the world was Rome;" but what is it now? Where is the Queen of Nations?

"Thou, stranger, which for Rome in Rome here seek'st,
And nought of Rome in Rome perceiv'st at all,
Those same old walls—old arches which thou seest,
Old palaces—is that which Rome men call.
Behold what wreck, what ruin, and what waste,
And how that she, which with her mighty power
Tam'd all the world, hath tam'd herself at last,
The prey of Time, which all things doth devour."

"Rome, living, was the world's sole ornament,
And, dead, is now the world's sole monument."*

We have now traced the immense mass of the broken and scattered ruins that overspread the deserted surface of the Palatine, like the skeleton of a mighty giant. Notwithstanding the ages that have passed since their erection, it is not their existence, but their destruction, that excites our amazement. So solid is their structure, that no common fate could have overwhelmed them, and

* Vide Ruins of Rome, in Edmund Spenser's Poems.

it has evidently been the work, not of time, but of violence. Even now, broken and ruined as they are,—if their final fall be not accelerated by the convulsions of nature or the labours of man,—they bid fair to stand, while a long series of generations shall visit them and pass away into dust.

LETTER XV.

THE CAPITOL.

How I hate antiquarians! They destroy all one's happy illusions and delightful dreams, and leave one nothing in return but dismal doubts and cold uncertainties.

"When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" but wise I must be, though sadly against my will; and yet, after hearing and comparing all the contradictory opinions of the most famous of these stupid people—after listening to more dry discussions, and poring over more musty old books, than my ears and eyes can well endure; the end of all my knowledge is, that, like the Athenian sage, I know that I know nothing, and, what is worse, I suspect that nothing is to be known; nothing at least that I want to know, can they tell me, and what they have to teach, I do not wish to learn. They have carefully grubbed up all the rubbish of antiquity, but lost the gems; and the reproach that was made to one of the tribe applies justly to all—

> "'O fie!" quoth Time to Thomas Hearne,
> "Whatever I forget, you learn."

Antiquarianism seems to me to be the genuine science of puzzling. It is like a labyrinth, the farther you go into it, the more you are bewildered; and its professors, who pretend to be your guides through its mazes, only lead you farther astray. They can perplex, but they cannot clear up—they can tell you what a thing is not, but not what it is. If to doubt be philosophical, then are they the greatest of philosophers, for they never do any thing else; and yet their credulity is at times even more extraordinary than their scepticism. Would you believe that one of them gave me a long account of the revolutions of Latium for about a thousand years before Romulus, as true history! But this was even surpassed by the piece of information imparted to me, with profound gravity, by a learned, and exceedingly solemn amateur antiquary, that the Sicuti, a people of Illyrium, had possession of the Capitoline Hill several centuries before the time of the Aborigenes. This was no lapsus linguæ; for, in answer to my reiterated enquiries, he kindly repeated the information again and again.

Would you like to have any more of their lucubrations? Will it be any satisfaction to you to know, that at the time old Janus lived on Mount Janiculum, Saturn inhabited the Capitoline Hill, then called Saturnius; and that they were in the constant habit of fighting with each other in the most neighbourly manner possible, until at last Saturn, at the head of an army of Cretans, got the

better of Janus, who led on the Aborigenes, and reigned unmolested over both hills?

About the time these old gods were carrying on these martial operations here, I suppose Pales, the Goddess of Sheep, might be pastorally tending her flocks on the Palatine, and Hercules slaying Cacus on the Aventine. Indeed, if we go back to what —to the utter scandal of the antiquaries—I call the fabulous history of these hills, we shall find the days of Romulus and his Rome, comparatively quite recent. We shall hear of the Sicani, a body of Spanish people, who had possession of the Palatine, but who, being molested by some other people, went away in a pet to Sicily, and made room for Evander and a colony of Arcadians, who did not, however, come to inhabit it for several centuries afterwards—the precise number of which is not very accurately ascertained. We shall, if we have patience, be entertained with long histories of a variety of people, cities, wars, and revolutions, both before and after the time of Janus and Saturn—with catalogues of kings whose existence is not very certain,—and with accounts of more dynasties, catastrophes, battles, and tumults, than you, I am sure, could be brought to listen to. I will therefore spare you the recital of all this farrago, which I was doomed to endure; and referring you to Virgil for all the traditional history of the Romans that is worth attending to, I will at once generously bring you down to the period when Æneas and his Trojans built Lavinium near the sea, (about twenty miles south of Rome,) and his son Ascanius found-

ed Alba Longa, the capital of Latium, on the sloping side of the Alban Mount, the site of which can be traced to this day—by antiquarian eyes,—although the city was razed to the ground by Tullus Hostilius.

It was, nobody knows how many centuries after this, that Rome was built on the Palatine; and one of the first cares of its warlike founder, was to protect his infant city by a fortress on the Capitoline Hill. But he seemed to have been more solicitous for its safety than its sanctity; for it does not appear that he erected any temple for the worship of the gods, until, after having defeated in single combat Acron, King of the Ceninensians, a Sabine people, who are supposed to have come from Monte Celli, near Tivoli—he made a trophy of the arms of his defeated royal antagonist, slung them on an oak, and bore them in triumph, with his head crowned with laurel, to the Capitol Hill, where he dedicated these *opima spolia* to Jupiter Feretrius, in whose honour he built a temple, the most ancient of Rome.*

It was in the interval between the Rape of the

* Plutarch's Life of Romulus. Livy, book i. chap. 10.—His example was ever afterwards religiously followed by every victorious Roman general who killed with his own hand the king or leader of the enemy's troops; but, I believe, only two other instances of the *opima spolia* being offered up in the Temple of Feretrian Jove occurred during the whole course of the Republic; and these were by Cornelius Cossus and Claudius Marcellus.

Sabines, and the union with that nation, that this event happened. This temple, which was afterwards enlarged by Ancus Martius,* and rebuilt by Augustus, with a portico of six columns in front, is generally believed to have stood on the Tarpeian Rock, which had not then received the name it has since borne for nearly three thousand years. Tarpeia's treachery has procured her immortality. But for that, her name would not have been given to this hill, and we should never have heard of her.

When the Sabines had got possession of the citadel by her treason, and when they fought with the Romans with all the rancour of deadly hatred and revenge, in the plain between the hills, which was afterwards the Forum;—in the moment of desperate conflict, the Romans were driven back even to the gate of their city, where their leader, after vainly endeavouring to rally them, threw up his hands to heaven, and called on the Omnipotent Jove to stop their flight. They instantly wheeled round, and in turn repulsed the Sabines; and on the spot where his prayer was granted, Romulus vowed a temple to Jupiter Stator, who was ever afterwards adored as the god that prevented the Romans from flying from their enemies.†

In these days the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus

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* Livy, book i. chap. 33.

† From a passage in Livy, it would appear that this temple was not built till the year of Rome 458, "when M. Attilius Regulus, in a battle against the Samnites, vowed a tem-

was not built. It was vowed to Jupiter Optimus Maximus by the first Tarquin,* but was built by Tarquinius Superbus. It was in digging the foundations of this temple that a human head was found, which the Augurs declared to be emblematical of future empire; and in consequence, the hill which was originally called Saturnius, and then Tarpeia, was now christened Capitolius, because this head, it seems, belonged to somebody called Tolius, or Olius;† though how they knew the man's name from his scull, I never could discover.

After this period, no other part of the hill, except the precipitous rock down which malefactors were thrown, retained the name of the treacherous Tarpeia.‡ Though it is certain that it was on the western side of the Capitoline Hill, it would be vain now to enquire where was the precise spot of execution,—whether Manlius was hurled down that part of the precipice at the extremity of Monte Caprino, or that behind the Palazzo de' Conservator. There is still height enough in either, what-

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ple to Jupiter Stator, as Romulus had formerly done. But as hitherto there had only been a place marked out and consecrated for that temple, the commonwealth being a second time under the obligation of that vow, a regard for religion induced the Senate to order the temple itself to be erected this year."—Decade I. book 10. chap. 37. And yet previous mention is frequently made of this temple in history, as if actually built, for instance, at the death of Tarquinius Priscus.—Livy, lib. i. c. 41.

* Livy, lib. i. c. 38. † Livy, ibid.

‡ Vide Plutarch's Life of Romulus, p. 90. Langhorne's Translation, ninth edition.

ever you may have heard to the contrary, to make the punishment both tremendous and fatal, although not only have the assaults of time, war, and violence, but the very convulsions of nature, contributed to lower it; for repeated earthquakes have shattered the friable tufo of which it is composed, and large fragments of it fell so late as the middle of the fifteenth century.

The fall of these masses has diminished the elevation in two ways—by lowering the actual height, and filling up the base, to which the ruins of the overthrown buildings that once stood upon it, have materially contributed. Still, the average of various measurements and computations of its present elevation makes it above sixty feet; nor do I think it over-rated. Certainly, those who have maintained there would be no danger in leaping from its summit, would not, I imagine, be bold enough to try the experiment themselves.

Upon the Tarpeian rock, and on the site of the House of Manlius Capitolinus, which was razed to the ground after his execution, was built the Temple of Juno Moneta, or the mint; where the coins, dies, weights, and stamps were kept. Here, too, was the Casu Romuli, originally the straw-roofed cottage of Tatius the Sabine king, which, after his murder, passed into the possession of Romulus, and was therefore preserved with that religious veneration that even to the latest times was paid in Rome to every thing that related to its deified founder.*

* Seneca. Helv. 9.

Some remains of the ancient fortifications of the Capitol are still to be seen on this side of the hill. We went up a flight of steps to Monte Caprino, as it is now called, and entered one or two dirty cottages, where we saw walls of extraordinary solidity, which have apparently formed the interior of one of the towers of the Citadel. They are built of large blocks of peperin stone,* and are supposed to be of the age of Camillus; and consequently, with the exception of the Cloaca Maxima, to which they bear a strong resemblance, the most ancient of all the remains of antiquity at Rome. This eminence is generally believed to have been once occupied by the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius,—and the eastern summit of the hill, by that of Jupiter Capitolinus; but their respective situations have lately been the subject of much discussion. For my part, the question of which temple occupied which summit, is one I shall not enter upon; but leaving it to the antiquaries—not to decide, for I am perfectly certain they will never decide any thing,—but to dispute,—I shall content myself with adhering to the popular belief entertained during nearly

* This peperin stone, of which the walls of Servius Tullius and all the earlier works of Rome were built, is an aggregate of soft texture, and apparently of volcanic origin. After the Romans extended their conquests to Tibur (Tivoli,) they generally made use of the Tiburtine stone, which, for architectural purposes, is probably the most durable and the most beautiful in the world.

a thousand years, that Ara Cœli stands upon the site of Capitoline Jove. Indeed, if it fronted to the south,* and looked to the Forum and the Aventine,† I see no other spot that could combine these requisites. Be this as it may, this temple was one of the largest and most splendid of the ancient world; but its triple portico, its columns of precious marbles, its roof of burnished gold, its statues of ivory,‡ and all its other gorgeous wonders, I shall pass over unnoticed. It had besides the altar of Jupiter, a smaller edicola, or chapel, on each side, dedicated to Juno and Minerva; and ancient medals have been published representing the three deities within this temple. It also contained the altar of the God Terminus, which there was no means of getting rid of; for when Tarquin was about to build this temple, and all the other gods who had previously had possession of its proposed site, had signified, through the Augurs, their willingness to resign in favour of Capitoline Jove, this one was refractory, and pertinaciously retained his old station.§ It was indispensible to the worship of this deity that his temples should be uncovered, so that it is supposed there must always have been an opening in the roof above his altar. The statue of Jupiter Capitolinus was remarkable for the crown of oak which wreathed his brows, and

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* Plutarch. † Dion. Halicarnassus.

‡ Vide the description of it by Pliny and Dion. Halicarnassus.

§ Vide Livy, lib i. cap. 55. and Dion. Halicarnassus.

for the spear, instead of sceptre, which he bore in his hand.*

This temple, which was rebuilt by Vespasian, and again, and for the last time, by Domitian, was despoiled of its treasures by Genseric, King of the Vandals.

The small square, enclosed by the three palaces of the Senator's,—the Conservatori and the Statue Gallery, in the centre of which stands the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, is supposed, reasonably enough, to have been the Intermontium; for it is between the two mounts of the Capitol Hill, which were crowned by the Temples of the two Jupiters. In the Intermontium stood the Zelum, or asylum, consecrated by Romulus to the protection of outlaws. It is supposed to have been protected by the altar of Vejovis, which, being interpreted, means, it seems, the young or beardless, or else the wicked Jupiter,† whose statue had three darts in its hand. The fugitives who took refuge here, and placed their hand upon its sacred stone, were safe, whatever might have been their crimes.‡ They were not admitted into the walls

* It appears so in an ancient medal.

† Gell. 5. 13.

‡ At a later period, the statues of the emperors were inviolable sanctuaries, from which even the worst of criminals could not be torn. In like manner, the altars of Christianity have been converted—or, I should say, perverted—into a protection towards the very crimes they were raised to banish from the world. It may indeed be observed, that not only the Catholic sanctuaries, but most of the usages of that church, are of Pagan origin.

of Rome, which then only encircled the Palatine, but lived upon this hill. This altar was surrounded with a grove,—but a magnificent name must not mislead us,—and few indeed must have been the trees that could have found room to have grown here. Perhaps the changes of time, and the fall of masses of rock from its summit, may have materially diminished the surface of this hill; but certainly we should now be puzzled to find room for all the Temples of the various Fortunes,—of Faith, Opis, Hercules, Ceres, and other multifarious deities; for the Triumphal Arch of Scipio Africanus, on which stood the famous statue of Aristides teaching a youth to play upon the lyre; for the Arch of Nero, on which the bronze horses, that have made so many journies to and fro between Constantinople and Venice, and Venice and Paris, are foolishly said to have stood; for the Curia Calabra, where the inferior priests, after making their observations on the new moon, used to convene the people to acquaint them when the ides and nones would fall; for the Public Portico, and for the endless catalogue of buildings of all kinds, that antiquarians assign to this little spot. It is most probable, however, that many of them succeeded to each other, and clearly impossible that the whole could ever have stood at once upon this hill.

Beneath the Senator's Palace, or rather forming the lower part of its walls, are considerable remains of an ancient edifice, built of large square blocks of peperin stone, which are distinctly visible both on

its south and west sides. It is generally supposed to have been the Tabularium, where the laws and public records were suspended on tables of bronze, and not less than three thousand of them are said to have been destroyed in the conflagration which ensued, during the bloody conflict which took place in the Capitol between the parties of Vitellius and Vespasian.* The walls of the Tabularium itself, however, the antiquaries seem to think escaped the flames, (though the destruction they caused must have been tolerably serious, when Vespasian thought it necessary to set the example of clearing away the rubbish, by carrying off a part of it on his own shoulder,†) and they consider these we now see to be of the age of Sylla, by whom the Tabularium was built.

When we visited the interior of this ancient building, one of the Senator's servants conducted us down long flights of stairs from the palace, and through cold and dirty passages to the remains of an arched corridor of considerable extent, and of a noble and solid style of architecture, not unlike

* Vespasian, however, took great pains to repair the loss as far as it was possible, by causing search to be made through all the libraries and cities, both of the eastern and western world, for copies of them, "and thus again furnished a collection of ancient records, in which were contained the decrees of the Senate almost from the building of the city; and also of the acts of the Comitia relative to the alliances, treaties, and privileges granted to any nation or individual." Vide Suetonius in Vita Ves.

† Suetonius in Vita.

those of the Coliseum; and for my own part, I should think its pretensions to higher antiquity very dubious, and that this, whatever it may be, like the rest of the buildings of the Capitol, was in all probability rebuilt by Vespasian.

The antiquarians have been so much puzzled to accommodate all the buildings which stood here with sufficient room, that they have been obliged to pile one upon the top of another,—Pelion upon Ossa; and some of them say this was the Public Portico; that the Tabularium was built above it; and that above the Tabularium stood the Athenæum and Public Library, instituted by Hadrian. But this is mere conjecture.

Such was once the Capitoline Hill. And when we think of its invulnerable Citadel, its vanished temples, its triumphal arches, its classic porticos, its golden statues, and all its unparalleled but forgotten splendours,—it is indeed a contrast to look round on the scattered ruins of that seat of empire which awed the world,—to behold a convent of bare-footed friars usurping the proud Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus,—a few miserable hovels crowning the Tarpeian rock,—and the palace of a modern Roman Patrician,* occupying the site of the house of Ovid and the School of Philosophers.

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* The Palazzo Caffarelli,—which has been supposed to fill the ancient site of the above mentioned buildings. It is much more certain, however, that in its stables, cellars, and gardens, are considerable remains of the ancient fortifications of the Citadel.

The Senator's Palace,—but you have heard so much of the Senator's Palace, that perhaps you would like to hear something of the Senator; and the images of Cato, and Cicero, and Brutus, and the Gracchi, rushing upon your mind, you will perhaps expect that this last of Roman Senators should unite their virtues.

Alas! this Senator without a Senate—this Judge, without the power of doing justice—this Ruler, without rule—is a foreign Italian of noble birth, appointed by the Pope to bear that empty name. He is a pageant, a phantom, a jest; a slave without power, or even pride, that can hear itself saluted "the Roman Senator," without feeling the bitter mockery of such a name!

This office has existed more than five hundred years. When the powerful eloquence of Arnold of Brescia, the earliest, and perhaps the most enlightened and irreproachable of all the champions of civil and religious liberty, had shot a gleam of promise on the Seven Hills, even amidst the darkness of the twelfth century, Rome for a moment saw her ancient rights restored. But her liberty was an accident; her slavery a habit. And when, by the decree of an English Pontiff,* and a barbarian monarch†—the apostle and the martyr of freedom had expiated his heresy at the stake, and his ashes were scattered in the Tiber—the Roman Senate, which he had roused into life and action,

* Adrian the 4th. † Frederick Barbarossa.

after the slumber of ages, and which in him seemed to lose its soul—divided, distracted, and torn with dissensions, delegated its power to one individual, annually elected, and named the Senator, whose privileges the Pope was compelled to acknowledge. Not a Roman, however, was found, who did not abuse the trust; and it was therefore decreed, that aliens from a distant state should alone be appointed, and such only, are even now eligible to this office. A Roman cannot be a Roman Senator; but foreign princes, and even the Popes themselves, have filled the post. The election, from being annual and popular, soon became permanent and arbitrary. The dignity was held for life—the authority was gradually limited and finally annulled,—and the office of Roman Senator soon ceased to be any thing but a name.

The internal administration of the city is regulated by the governor of Rome, an officer appointed by the Pope, and removeable at pleasure, who rules with arbitrary authority.

Near the base of the Capitoline Hill, and beneath the Church of S. Pietro, in Carcere, are the Tullian, or Mamertine Prisons, or at least all that now remain of them. They were originally begun by Tullus Hostilius, and finished by Ancus Martius, or, according to other accounts, they were begun by Ancus Martius, and finished by Servius Tullius; and they were certainly considerably enlarged in succeeding times. Here the accomplices of Catiline's conspiracy, when, by the effects of Cicero's accusing eloquence, they were condemn-

ed to immediate death, were conducted from the Senate-house through the Forum, and strangled in these dungeons. Here, too, Jugurtha perished of hunger,* and Perseus, the captive King of Macedonia, lingered in hopeless imprisonment; but, towards the close of his life, he was removed, at the intercession of his humane conqueror, to a less horrible abode.†

There are still two dungeons in these prisons, an upper and a lower one; and it is said that in the deepest of these St Peter was imprisoned by command of Nero. The pillar he was chained to is still shewn, and so also is a miraculous spring of water, which sprung forth at the apostle's command when he was going to baptize the forty converted gaolers. The present custode of this dungeon thinks he triumphantly refutes all the cavils of scepticism with respect to its miraculous origin, when he offers this water to you to taste of, and assures you it is real (*acqua vera.*) He never fails, too, to make you observe a hole in the wall of the staircase, which he says is the impression of the apostle's head when the gaoler brutally drove it against the wall. When it was shown to us, a wicked wit of the party irreverently observed, that this only proved St Peter's head to be the thicker of the two.

There is nothing but tradition to prove the im-

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* Salust. de Bel. Jugurt.

† Plutarch's Life of Paulus Æmilius.

prisonment of St Peter here; and, though by no means improbable, those who have been long at Rome will not be inclined to give much weight to such unsupported legends. The place of the apostle's martyrdom is pointed out at San Pietro, in Montorio; and the splendid dome of St Peter's now rises above his supposed tomb.

Though St Paul is said to have been imprisoned in the same dungeon, no miracles of his working are recorded.

The entrance to these prisons was at the upper story and at the side. A staircase from the Forum, connected with the door of the prisons by a bridge, led up to it, and was known by the name of the Scalæ Gemoniæ, the Stair of Groans. The corpses of the criminals who had been executed in the dungeons, were publicly exposed upon this bridge, or ignominiously hurled from it into the Forum. These stairs only conducted to the prisons; they did not lead to the Capitol, to which there were three ascents, two for foot passengers, and one (the Via Sacra) for the triumphal cars which bore the conquerors to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. This last, after passing beneath the Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum, turned to the left, and ascended to the summit of the hill,—nobody knows exactly how; but that it did ascend, (and the cars upon it) is an historical fact that can admit of no dispute. I shall perhaps return to this subject when I get you down into the Forum. Of the other two ascents, one was the Centus Gradus, consisting of a hundred or more

steep steps, on the west side of the hill, up the face of the Tarpeian Rock, which is supposed to have commenced nearly from the present site of the Piazza Montanara;* and the other, the Clivus Capitolinus, is believed to have been on the side of the Velabrum, looking towards the Aventine; thus all the three ascents of the Palatine were extremely near each other, being on the south-west and west sides of the hill. There was no ascent whatever on the north, nor, it is believed, on the east side.

I must long since have exhausted your patience with this tedious account of the Capitol; but who can tread its soil without seeking to recall to memory or imagination what it once was? Who can gaze, even upon one solitary stone of the citadel of Republican Rome, without endeavouring to penetrate the obscurity of time, and catch even a faint uncertain glimpse of that sacred seat of the virtues and the liberties that have fled for ever?

Yes! long ages of ruin have since rolled away—deep degradation has covered it, and the darkness of oblivion has settled upon it—and yet, does not the light that once shone here, still shed its brightness through the world?

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* Livy, (lib. viii.) places it at the Forum Olitorium, on the site of which the Piazza Montanara is generally supposed to stand.

LETTER XVI.

THE AVENTINE.

We spent this morning in visiting the Aventine, the most western of the Seven Hills. It is divided from the Palatine by the Valley of the Circus Maximus, and round its northern base the Tiber flows. It is said to have derived its name from Aventinus, a King of Alba, who was buried here in a laurel grove, which was preserved to a very late period upon this mount.*

It was added to Rome, as I have already mentioned, by Ancus Martius, and peopled by the captive inhabitants of Politorium, Tellenæ, and Ficanæ, three Latin villages at a short distance from Rome, which he destroyed. The whole, or at least the greater part of this Mount, must have been included in the wall of Servius Tullius. Some antiquarians, indeed, have chosen to assert, that it was first added to Rome by the Emperor Claudius; but no authority can be adduced in support of their

* Pliny, in his Nat. Hist. mentions the *Laureto*, on the Aventine.

opinions, and an irresistible weight of evidence can be brought against it.* Besides, how, in the name of common sense, could Rome be the city of the Seven Hills, if it was confined to six?†

In the early ages of Rome, indeed, it is certain that the whole neither of the Esquiline nor Aventine hills was inhabited. We read in Livy of nightly meetings of the disaffected‡ being held upon the former, to the great alarm of the Senate; and the two armies that joined in rebellion against the tyranny of the Decemvirs, encamped upon the latter.‖ But from the prodigious extent of the Aventine, which is computed by Dionysius Halicarnassus to be three miles in circumference, it is not surprising that there was abundant room for encampments at that early period.

But though the wall of Servius Tullius, which was not enlarged till the time of Aurelian, certainly included at least more than half of the Aventine Mount, the part of it without the walls is believed not to have been comprehended within the Pomœrium until its sacred circle was extended by Claudius. The Aventine has two distinct summits, and indeed it might almost be called two hills, for they are divided by a valley; but I do not find

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* Livy, book i. chap. 33.—Dionysius Halicarnassus, ii, iii, and iv; and Strabo, book v. Vide Nardini, lib. i. cap. 5. for a crowd of authorities, and a long dissertation in proof of it.

† Septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces. Virgil, lib. vi.

‡ Livy, lib. ii. c. 28. ‖ Ibid. lib. iii. c. 50.

that they were ever distinguished by different names. Near the base of the most southern of its heights, are the gigantic ruins of the Baths of Caracalla; but it is the northern summit which overhangs the river, that we must now ascend. It was this that Remus chose for the site of his inauspicious augury, and which, long before that period, was famed for the exploits of Hercules, who pursued the robber Cacus to his den on this mount. The entrance to this cave did not, it seems, overhang the river; and indeed it would have been utterly impossible for Cacus, or any other person, to have dragged the oxen up this precipice backwards by their tails.* As it was, he must have had his own troubles in pulling them, in this manner, all the way from the banks of the river where they were grazing,† to that part of the hill facing the Palatine, where the opening of his den was situated. Hercules, as soon as he awoke, was guided to the place by their lowings; and, after vainly endeavouring to force open the mouth of the cave, went round to the side that overlooks the river, hurled down a rock that formed the back of it, and opened for himself a passage to his revenge.

But being *modestly* of opinion that Virgil tells the story rather better than I do, I will refer you to him.

In consequence of this invention of breaking open the cavern, Hercules, who piously ascribed it to Jove, dedicated an altar to Jupiter the In-

* Vide Livy, book i. chap. 7. † Virgil, lib. viii.

ventor, at the foot of the hill, near the river, and raised another at the same time to himself, under the name of Hercules the Victorious. This must not be confounded with the Ara Maxima, or great altar, which was dedicated to Hercules by his contemporary, Evander, at the base of the north-western corner of the Palatine Hill; was enclosed by Romulus within the line of his furrow; and was venerated from the earliest to the latest period of Roman story.

The Altar of the Elician Jove, (Jovis Elicii) which stood upon the Aventine Hill, was erected by Numa, in order to draw down upon earth the King of Heaven, invisible in the terrors of his lightnings and thunderbolts. The process of accomplishing this, Numa learnt from a drunken Faun, or, according to some authorities, from the rural deities Faunus and Picus, whom he had contrived to intoxicate by mixing the waters of the fountain on the Aventine, which they frequented, with wine and honey; and having caught them in this situation, he tied them with cords, in spite of their Proteus power of transformation, till they grew sober, and let him into the secret.*

* Vide Ovid. Fast. ii. iii.; and Plutarch, in his Life of Numa, who is pleased to give us the receipts, (consisting of a mixture of onions, human hairs, and live pilchards,) by which a mortal could thus controul the Deity. He declares it to be in use "to this day;" but neither the inspired Numa, nor the drunken Fauns, had the wit to invent the charm discovered by Benjamin Franklin.

No traces of this famed or fabled brook, which Numa and the Fauns loved to haunt on this mount, can now be discerned. But the Cave of Cacus, we are gravely informed, is still extant on the steep side of the Aventine that overhangs the Tiber; and some of our active friends scrambled about in search of it among the thorns and brush-wood that fringe its perpendicular bank, at the imminent peril of breaking their necks, and to the actual demolition of their clothes. But though they found holes in abundance, they never met with any that could contain a single ox, or that, by any stretch of courtesy, could be dignified with the name of a cave; so that the abode of Cacus, as far as I know, remains undiscovered to this day. There are no traces of the ancient ascent of Mount Aventine—the Clivus Publicii*—but a modern road, bounded by two high walls, led us to the summit, where we stopped at the Church of Santa Maria del Priorata, which, with the adjacent unfurnished and desolate villa, is now the property of the Braschi family. We ascended to the weed-covered Belvedere, at the top, and from thence gazed around us at the wide expanse of the Aventine, in all its loneliness and desolation. Of all the ancient and magnificent buildings that once covered it, not a trace remains—not a stone to mark where they have stood: nor is there any erection, even of modern days, that meets the eye, except some decaying churches and half-deserted convents.

* Ovid Fast. v.—Livy, lib. xx.

At our feet rolled the Tiber, sullen and sad, whose "yellow" waters, a little higher up the stream, broke over the ruined pier of the Pons Sublicius, where the single valour of Horatius Cocles defended Rome from an army of her foes.

On the opposite shore, the long white line of the buildings of the Ripa Grande, the modern port of Rome, glittered in the sun. Behind it rose Monte Janiculum, with its churches, convents, palaces, and fountains hanging on its side, half concealed in wood; and at its base, stood the majesty of St Peter's.

On our right, the Palatine, covered with the dark-grey ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, hid from our view the Roman Forum; and, far above the palaces, the cupolas, and the belfries of the Modern City, towered the storied hills, that all around bounded the wide plain of the deserted Campagna.

Such was the prospect that met our view from the summit of one of the Seven Hills of Rome. At its base were anciently the Navalia, or Port of Rome, the Temple of Portumna, the Goddess of the Port, the Emporium, or magazines, the public granaries, storehouses for salt, &c. &c. some remains of which are still to be seen on the hill side, on the left of the road leading to the Porta San Paola. In Republican days, the Aventine was the residence of Ennius, the friend of Scipio Africanus, and the first of the Poets of Rome; and in the time of the Empire, it was dignified with the private house of Trajan, the best of her emperors.

On this mount stood the Temple, Portico, and Library of Liberty,* the first public library in Rome. Here, too, in later times, was the Temple of Isis,† stigmatized by Juvenal‡ as the scene of the most disgraceful licentiousness; but it is vain to go through a dry enumeration of all the vanished monuments of splendour which once crowded this deserted mount, since their very site is wholly unknown; it is only certain, that on this part of it (overlooking the Tiber) stood the famous Temple of "the Common Diana," built by Servius Tullius; so called, because common to all the Latin tribes,—the Temple of Juno Regina, vowed by Camillus in the war with Veii, and to which, the statue of the goddess, having first nodded assent, was transported with great pomp from the conquered city,§—and the Temple of the Bona Dea, which is said to have stood on the very spot where Remus took his inauspicious augury. Into that temple none but women might ever be admitted; into these mysteries none but women might ever be initiated. It was a sort of female free-masonry, and the rites practised there were as carefully concealed from the male sex in these days, as are the secrets of the lodge from the fairer part of creation in ours. It would seem, however, that certain rites

* Livy, Decad. ii. book xix. and Decad. iii. book iv.

† Mentioned by Victor.

‡ Juvenal, Sat. vi. v. 488.

§ Vide Livy, Dec. i.

of the mysterious goddess were solemnized in private houses rather than in the temple of her worship, from the well known circumstance of Clodius having entered the house of Julius Cæsar, disguised as a woman, on the night of their celebration, in consequence of which Cæsar divorced his wife, even while he declared his belief in her innocence, because "the wife of Cæsar might not even be suspected."

According to the suppositions of some antiquaries, the site of the Temple of the Bona Dea is now occupied by the Church of Santa Maria del Priorata. But this is vague conjecture. Somebody very ingeniously called antiquarianism the science of guessing. It is nothing more. It is the very reverse of mathematics; nothing is proved; all must be supposed. It is the region of uncertainty; the atmosphere of mist and vapour; "and shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it."

This church, in more chivalric days, belonged to the Knights of Malta. At present there is nothing to be seen in it except a marble Sarcophagus, adorned with a bas relief of Pallas and the Muses, and probably destined for an ancient poet, but now possessed by the bones of some obscure old bishop. 'Tis somewhat strange, that this worthy prelate, who, I dare say, was never visited by the Goddess of Wisdom, or the Nine, in his life, should be thus surrounded with them in death. The adjoining gardens are kept with a degree of neatness, very rare out of England; and even at this dead season

of the year, the roses and wall flowers were in full bloom. Transported at the sight, I was in the midst of happiness and flower-beds, when the old gardener insisted upon my leaving them; and in spite of my repugnance conducted me, with determined resolution and obstinate silence, to the garden gate, out of which he turned me, as I conceived, with ignominy, because I had been pulling his violets: but I found I had only been thrust through it, in order to be surprised with a view of St Peter's through the key-hole, so contrived as just to take in the whole elevation of that superb edifice, terminating a vista formed by two tall evergreen hedges, or vegetable walls.

The adjacent church of St Alessio, with its deserted convent, has been purchased by the abdicated King of Spain, and part of it is now fitting up for the villa of his ex-Majesty, who has also repaired the church at his own expence, and supports four friars there to perform its duties.

Having walked through the old monarch's villa, which is handsomely fitted up, and examined the paintings, some of which are good, we were going away without entering the church, when one of the friars assured us it possessed one of the most valuable pictures in the world. With eager eyes we hurried to see it, and when at last, after much preparation, the silken curtain that covered it was withdrawn, we beheld an old blackened piece of wood, on which something like a singed human face was visible, surmounted with a gilt crown, and

all spotted over with golden stars. It was, we were informed, a likeness of the Virgin Mary, by no less a person than St Luke himself, and it must be acknowledged that he has not flattered her. Any thing so ugly I never before beheld. I told the friar that I hoped it was no offence to observe, that whatever might have been the virtues of the Evangelist, his talents in portrait-painting were by no means great.

The good father did not extol very highly its merits as a painting, but he enlarged much upon the miracles it had wrought, and seemed to think that "goodness was better than beauty." Like all the other pictures of the Madonna by the same hand,—and they abound all over Italy,—this is a miraculous image.

I think Lanzi, in his Storia Pittorica, mentions, that they are all supposed to have been executed early in the *secoli bassi*, by one Messer Luca, a Greek painter, or a pupil of the Greeks, and they are evidently works of that barbarous school; and, barbarously enough, are ascribed to the poor Evangelist.

We walked to the neighbouring Church of Santa Sabina, in order to see the ancient columns, the spoils of some temple of the Aventine, with which it is adorned. Two of a singular sort of granite stand at the entrance; and in the interior, twenty-four fluted Corinthian columns of Grecian marble support the naves. This church is supposed to occupy the site of the Temple of Diana,

and the discovery of a mosaic pavement, representing a chace of wild beasts in the garden of the Dominican monks, to whom it belongs, would seem to confirm that opinion. This piece of mosaic is preserved above one of the doors in the Vatican. Two other mosaic pavements, representing similar chases, and a small Ephesian Diana in oriental alabaster, were found in an adjoining vineyard.

Some of the gentlemen of our party, who were not yet contented with their thorny researches after Cacus's den, and thought, that although they could not climb up to it from below, they might yet perchance lower themselves down to it from above, made me (as they did not speak Italian themselves) put manifold questions to the monks touching its supposed situation; but vain were our queries. When we asked them about Cacus, they talked to us about St Dominic, who, as they gratuitously informed us, once lived here, and received letters from heaven, written by the Holy Trinity; and when we enquired about the Temple of Diana, they told us of Santa Sabina, who, poor woman, it seems, was sewed up in a sack with her waiting-maid, and thrown into the Tiber, because she would be a Christian.

I confess I should not have been sorry to have heard that St Dominic had been served so himself, or that he, who was the cause of thousands perishing at the stake, had himself suffered a death as cruel. You will remember he was the founder of the Inquisition.

This church contains a very fine painting, the master-piece of Sasso Ferrato; at least incomparably the best of his works that I have ever seen. It represents the Virgin giving alms to St Dominic, and St Catherine kneeling before the infant Redeemer.

Whilst some of the party were running after the Cave of Cacus, I lingered in the Church. The belief that it occupied the place of the famous Temple of Diana, had, from various circumstances, became strongly impressed upon my mind; nor could I think without emotion, that I stood amidst the columns, and on the site of that temple, where, in the latest moments of his life, the younger Gracchus, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, offered up the prophetic prayer, "that the Roman people, for their base ingratitude, and their treacherous desertion of him, should be slaves for ever."*

Amply was that prayer fulfilled. As if from that moment, the Romans gradually passed beneath the yoke of despotism, never to be liberated. They have indeed known change of tyrants. In a long succession of ages, they have been the successive sport of Roman, Barbarian, Goth, Vandal, Pope, and Gaul; but Freedom, which fled for ever with the latest sigh of Cicero, has revisited the Seven Hills no more; and glory and honour, and virtue and prosperity, one by one, have followed in her train. Long annals of tyranny, of unexampled vice,

* Plutarch—Life of Caius Gracchus.

of misery and of crime, polluted with still increasing luxury and moral turpitude, record the rapid progress of Rome's debasement. It seems to be the decree of Heaven, that liberty, once lost, shall never be regained,—and that nations which have once fallen, shall rise no more.

LETTER XVII.

THE CŒLIAN AND ESQUILINE HILLS.

THE long extension of the Cœlian, the most southern of the Seven Hills, is crossed by the lofty arches of Nero's Aqueduct, in majestic masses of ruin. Its abandoned site seems now to be divided between the monks of St Gregory, and of St John and St Paul, its sole inhabitants; and the chime of their convent bells, as it summons them to their often repeated prayers by day, or rouses them to their midnight vigils, is the only sound that breaks upon its deep silence and solitude. No human form appears, except that, below the spreading palm tree, or the dark cypress grove that crowns the brow of the hill in the garden of St John and St Paul, the sable garments of a monk may at times be seen flitting by.

The precipitous banks of these grounds are encircled by nameless ruins of wide extent, consisting of arches, recesses, niches, and obscure passages, which vainly rouse curiosity, for their date, and author, and purpose, are alike unknown Busy

conjecture, indeed, has pointed them out as remains of the Nymphæum of the luxurious Nero, but this is scarcely in possibility. To whom they may have once belonged we know not, but oblivion has now made them wholly her own.

Beneath the tower of the convent are some remains of an ancient building, which seems to have been destroyed to make way for its Gothic height. The vestiges which still remain, are evidently of the same age, style, and structure, as the Coliseum; they consist, like it, of an arched corridor, and another is said to be underneath the ground we stand on. They are supposed to have formed a part of the Vivarium.

The Church of San Stefano Rotondo, the reputed Temple of Claudius; deserted, and mouldering to decay, crowns the western extremity of the Cœlian Hill; and upon a wide and turf-covered space, that is called its most eastern summit, stands the great Basilica of St John Lateran. The monuments of modern superstition are here triumphant over the battlemented walls, the falling arches, and the ruined aqueducts of ancient greatness.

The Cœlian Mount, according to Dionysius Halicarnassus, was first added to Rome by Romulus,—according to Livy, by Tullus Hostilius,—according to Strabo, by Ancus Martius,—and according to Tacitus, by Tarquinius Priscus. What the ancient historians of Rome differed about, we need not pretend to decide upon. All, however, agree, that it formed a part of *Regal* Rome; and we must be content to remain in uncertainty as

to which of the kings first occupied it. Livy, who gives its history the most circumstantially, informs us,* that after Tullus Hostilius had razed Alba to the ground, and brought its captive inhabitants to Rome, he built his own palace on this hill, and ever afterwards lived there; but we find no authority in this or any other account, for the belief still popularly entertained, that the Curia Hostilia, which he built to contain the Senate, augmented by the transported Alban families, stood here; on the contrary, it is well known always to have been in the Roman Forum.†

Tacitus‡ relates, that this mount was originally called Querquetulana, from the groves of oak with which it was covered, and that it received the name of Cœlius from a Hetrurian chief who led a body of Hetrurians to the succour of Tarquinius Priscus; and afterwards, with his followers, inhabited a part of it, and of the adjacent low grounds. A street extending from the Roman Forum towards the Velabrum, and from them called the Tuscan street, was, however, the principal residence of these settlers. In the time of the empire, Tiberius commanded that it should be called Mount Augustus, because a statue of himself, in the house of a private citizen on this hill, had *miraculously* remained unconsumed in the midst of a conflagration; just as divers images of the Virgin Mary have, in times

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* Lib i. c. 30.

† Vide Livy, lib i. c. 47, 48.

‡ Tacitus, 4. Ann.

and places where great faith prevails, escaped the flames. The cause of this Pagan miracle was perhaps satisfactorily accounted for by its effect,—the elevation of the proprietor of this miraculous image to riches and honours. Whether a similar explanation might not be given of some of the Catholic miracles, I shall not presume to enquire. But though Tiberius could work miracles, dispose of the lives of unoffending millions, and, like Jove on earth, make the universe tremble at his nod,—yet the power of this master of the world was insufficient to change the name of this insignificant speck on its surface, and except to his own ear, the Cœlian was never called by any other appellation.

Deserted, as it is now, it was once covered with sacred fanes, and monuments of magnificence.

Not to mention a little temple (Sacellum) in the sacred grove of oak, guarded by nymphs, which probably disappeared at a very early period, there was, upon this mount, a sacred tree, (Arbor Sancta,) dedicated to some god as a temple, a custom which, however druidical it may appear to us, would seem not to have been very uncommon among the Romans.* There were also the Temple of Faunus, of Claudius, of Bacchus—of the Goddess Carnæ, built by the Elder Brutus, after the expulsion of the Tarquins—the Sacellum of Diana, mentioned by Cicero, and destroyed by Piso —the Schools of Arms and Letters,† and the

* Pliny, lib. xii. c. 1.

† Called Ludus Matutinus, and Ludus Gallicus.

School of Gladiators—the Macellum Magnum, built by Augustus, where meat, fish, and all sorts of provisions were sold—together with hundreds of other buildings, of which the very sites are unknown, and every trace has long since vanished.

Some broken inscriptions that were once dug up, gave some faint shadow of reason to believe that the Castra Peregrina, or Camp for Foreign Soldiers, *might* have been where now stands Santa Maria Navicella, a church which derives its name from a little marble ship that was placed before it in the time of Leo the Tenth. Much dispute has arisen whether this sculptured bark be ancient or modern—that it is ugly, I apprehend can admit of none.

Having finished our rapid survey of the Cœlian Hill, let us now descend from it to the Coliseum, which stands in the basin formed by the Cœlian, the Esquiline, and the Palatine Hills, once occupied by Nero's Great Pond; and passing round that august ruin, ascend the Esquiline Hill.

We paused at its summit beside the ruins of the mighty Claudian Aqueduct, and the scattered vestiges of buildings, of every age, that are spread over its wide extent. A part of the Esquiline is covered with the streets and buildings of Modern Rome, but the rest is abandoned to desolation. One half may be numbered with the living, the other with the dead; for the mouldering and uncertain ruins of Roman days, and the deserted convents and churches of Papal ages, that are thinly scattered

over its wide expanse, people it only with remembrances. They are monuments of glory long since fled—of superstition tottering to its fall. The ruined structures of yesterday are laid low beside the ruined fabrics of two thousand years. We behold the majestic arches of the united Aqueducts of Claudius and Nero stretching over the waste where once was Rome—the castles of their waters—the lonely ruin of Minerva Medica—the subterranean sepulchres, over which the vine now flourishes—the triumphal arch of a debased Emperor—the overthrown temple of a prostrate god—and the deserted theatre of blood and carnage; mingled with the ruined convent whose grey walls have crumbled into far more total destruction—the weed-grown cloister, whose ancient inhabitants are gone, and the shrines of martyred saints, that know no votaries now. Such was the prospect that met our view on the lonely summit of the Esquiline, as we wandered among its widely-scattered ruins, its shapeless masses, and its nameless walls—fragments of the wreck of ages,—all that the flood of time had left behind. We waited for admittance to the ruins of a convent,* in which the Itinerario states, (we afterwards found falsely) some subterranean apartments, adorned with ancient paintings, were to be seen; but no human voice replied to our repeated call, and we left the "field of the

* The Convent of St Eustachio. These apartments were once discovered, and were supposed to have belonged to the Baths of the Emperor Gordian, but they were filled up again.

Esquiline"* at last, without having encountered one living being.

From its present, we must turn to its past state. The Esquiline Hill, as well as the Viminal and Quirinal, was added to Rome by Servius Tullius, who enclosed the greater part of it within the circuit of his walls, and built his palace upon it, which he continued to inhabit till the day of his death.

It was in his flight from the Curia Hostilia, (the Senate-house) in the Forum, to this palace on the Esquiline, that he was murdered by the emissaries of Tarquin, his son-in-law; and it was on her return to it from the door of the Senate-house, where she had saluted her husband king, that his unnatural daughter commanded her chariot wheels to be driven over the mangled corpse of her father. The street where this horrible scene happened, and which was ever afterwards called the *Vicus Sceleratus,* must therefore have been between the Forum and the Esquiline;† and though we have no data to ascertain its precise situation, yet if your imagination desires some point to repose on, you may, if you please, follow Nardini, who fixes the very spot where the chariot wheels of this monster passed over the bleeding body of her parent, exactly at the fountain beside the Church of La Madonna de' Monti.

The Esquiline Mount, though thus early the seat of royalty, was, during the greater part of the re-

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* Campus Esquilinus. † Livy, lib. i. c. 48.

publican age, the abode of the most mean and wretched of the Roman people, and their sepulchre. In that part of it which was without the walls, we are told their unburied bones were thrown,* a custom which reflects no great credit either on the decency, the humanity, or the policy of the Romans.

The Esquiline had, however, the honour of giving birth to the father of Empire, Julius Cæsar,† and with the empire it rose into importance. It was soon ennobled with the house and gardens of Mæcenas, of Virgil, of Sappho,‡ of the younger Pliny, of a part of Nero's Golden House, and of the Palace and Baths of the Emperor Titus, the ruins of which are still buried in its bosom. Since, therefore, it was the residence of emperors, ministers, favourites, and courtiers, it must have been that of the great and gay. They generally inhabited the Suburra, a long street which extended into the plain, and passed up this hill.‖ Its precise situation is uncertain; you may, if you please, labour through the long and perplexed dissertations that Nardini, and other departed antiquarians, have written upon it, or listen to the still more intolerable oral discourses that the existing tribe will pour into your wearying ear; for my part, I have endured them all, and am no wiser.

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* Vide Horace, Sat. viii.—Juvenal, &c. In various passages of the classics, this disgraceful custom is alluded to.

† Julius Cæsar was born in that part of the Suburra which was situated on this hill.

‡ Vide Nardini, and the authorities quoted by him.

‖ Vide Pliny's Letters.

Cicero tells us there was an Altar to Bad Fortune, or Misfortune, upon this hill,* erected, it is to be supposed, in propitiation of that most forbidding deity; for such a worship could have been carried on upon no other principle than that on which the Indians adore the devil.

The etymology of this mount, you will be happy to hear, is not to be traced. It has two summits, L'Oppio, on which stands the Church of St Pietro in Vincula, built upon a part of the extensive Baths of Titus; and Il Cispio, crowned with the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and supposed to have been anciently occupied by the Temple of Juno Lucina.

The Esquiline is of wide extent and undefined form;—the most southern and the most deserted of the three eastern hills of Rome,—the Esquiline, the Quirinal, and the Viminal.

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* Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 25.
Aram Malæ Fortunæ Esquilis consecratam videmus.

LETTER XIX.

VIMINAL AND QUIRINAL HILLS.

THE Viminal Hill is to me terra incognita. It is, or was, situated between the Esquiline and the Quirinal; and I suppose, "if it be not gone, it must be there still." But I have already confessed my incapacity to discern it, and after the most diligent scrutiny, I have been able to discover nothing, that, by any latitude of interpretation, can be construed into the least resemblance to a hill. The truth is, that it has sustained between its two puissant neighbours, (the Esquiline and the Quirinal) that extinction which a small state sometimes suffers between two large ones. It has received from them a martyrdom of rather a different description to that which St Lawrence underwent upon it some centuries before—a fact which I have the best authority for asserting—viz. that of the saint himself. At least, an Italian Count, who always talks to me in English, told me, that "San Lorenzo did say among his acts, that he was heated up, on a gridiron in the Baths of Olympiate, fitch *fare* on the Hille Viminall, *fare* now stands his' church of de bread and de ham."

Now, as the Count, and all the antiquarians, maintain that this church of *de bread and de ham*, or S. Lorenzo in *panis perna*—so called, I believe, from the doles of bread and ham dealt out to the poor at the convent door—stands upon the Viminal; and, as it seems, St Lorenzo,—who certainly ought to know best,—says himself he was broiled alive there, I comfort myself with the conviction, that, when I was at that church, I must, unknown to myself, have seen, and even stood upon that mount, though, to ordinary eyes, the said church seems rather to be in a hollow than upon a hill.

The Viminal, wherever it was, is said to have been so called from the altar of Jovis Vimineo, that stood upon it, or, perhaps, the altar received its name from the hill, and the hill from the osiers, that perhaps grew upon it, which one passage, in an ancient author, seems to render probable;* or perhaps, it bore some allusion to Vimen, the caduceus of Mercury.† The etymology is dubious, and has been the subject of much discussion; its obvious derivation from Collis Viminalis, the Hill of Osiers,—the most satisfactory and reasonable,—perhaps, on that account, is not admitted by the generality of antiquaries.

We must now bend our steps to the Quirinal, which, like the Viminal and Esquiline, was added to Rome by Servius Tullius;‡ for although an-

* Varr. L. iv. 8. † Stat. Th. ii. 30.

‡ Livy, lib. i. c. 44.

cient writers relate, that Numa had a house* upon this mount, which we are gravely assured by modern antiquarians stood immediately behind the present Barberini Palace, it was not considered a part of the city till enclosed within the Tullian walls. The Temple of Romulus Quirinus, from which it derives its name, was built by Numa, and Nardini fancies that it stood nearly on the spot now occupied by the pretty little church of S. Andrea Gesuiti. The pretended steps to the Temple of Romulus Quirinus, now at Ara Cœli, Fulvius says, were made from the marble belonging to a temple on this part of the Quirinal; so that, though the marble is ancient, it would seem that the steps are modern.

The Quirinal is the only one of the Seven Hills that is populous. It is covered with noble palaces, churches, streets, and fountains. It has too many modern buildings to boast many ancient ones. The vestiges of Constantine's Baths, in the garden of the Colonna Palace, and a part of those of Diocletian, which were built both on this and the invisible Viminal Hill, are, I think, the only remains of antiquity we see over its whole extent.

In the ruins of the Baths of Constantine were found the two grand colossal groups of a Young Man and Horse, which now stand before the Pope's Palace, on the summit of this hill, and from which are derived its modern name of Monte Cavallo, an

* Vide Plutarch, in Life of Numa.

appellation which is still the most in general use, although a recent feeling of classical taste has revived the ancient one of the Quirinal.

If the inscriptions on these statues be genuine, they are the works of Phidias and Praxiteles; and the antiquarians, who always contrive to blunder even where it would seem to be impossible, by an absurd anachronism, pronounced them to be rival groups of these two great masters, representing Alexander and Bucephalus; although the Athenian sculptor was dead before the Macedonian hero or his horse was born.

They are now supposed to represent Castor and Pollux, and are still believed to be by Phidias and Praxiteles. They are certainly extremely spirited and grand in their conception, but destitute of finish; and, more than all, of that high pre-eminent perfection which ought to mark the works of the first of sculptors. Their resemblance is so close in style, that one would be tempted to consider them works of the same age, if not of the same artist; and they approximate so nearly in design, that one might almost be permitted to hesitate before pronouncing them to be productions of masters so great, yet so totally dissimilar. It must at least be acknowledged that Praxiteles has made but a very slavish copy from the groupe of his great predecessor.

But any one who has studied the undoubted works of Phidias, in the Elgin Marbles, or felt the beauty of the masterpieces of Praxiteles, even in

their ancient copies,* will perhaps require something more to convince him that these groupes are the work of either of these great masters, than an inscription, the antiquity of which is dubious, and which, even if admitted, may, like half the inscriptions on ancient sculpture, be false.†

To me, it scarcely seems that their excellence is sufficient to have induced the Romans to bring groupes of such colossal size from Greece; neither is it probable such a circumstance would have passed unnoticed by ancient writers; and if they were executed at Rome, it is certain that Phidias, at least, never came there to make them.

But, whether or not the works of these great masters, they are fine pieces of sculpture, and are placed to great advantage on the summit of the Quirinal Hill. It would be in vain now to look for its three summits, the Collis Salutaris, the Collis Mutialis, and the Collis Latialis,‡ since one only can now be distinguished; and which of the three that is, we have no means of ascertaining.

I might, very much to your annoyance, and very little to your information, make a long and learned

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* No original work of Praxiteles, if we except this, is extant. But the ancient copies of his Cupid Bending the Bow, his Faun, and a few more, enable us to conceive their wonderful perfection.

† It is well known that it was a common trick to inscribe statues falsely with the names of great artists. The Venus de Medicis, which is marked with the name of Cleomenes, is an instance.

‡ Vide Varrone.

dissertation upon the multiplicity of ancient temples, baths, basilicas, circuses, porticos, and all the various descriptions of buildings that once covered it; but the catalogues that have come down to our times are chiefly of the degraded period of the empire; and the monuments of those days, when Rome had women for senators, and effeminate boys for emperors, could not be very interesting, even if they were less obscure. We may therefore regret the less that all traces of Heliogabalus's female Senate-house, and of buildings of a still less creditable description, have vanished; but there is one remembrance that can never pass away—it is, that the house of the Scipios was upon this hill. It is thought to have stood where are now the Colonna Palace and gardens; and there is still a little street, called Vico de' Cornelj, which we cannot but believe derives its name from the habitation of that illustrious race. But this is a dangerous subject for me, and I will not venture upon it, but at once conclude this hasty sketch of the last of the Seven Hills of Rome.

LETTER XIX.

THE ROMAN FORUM.

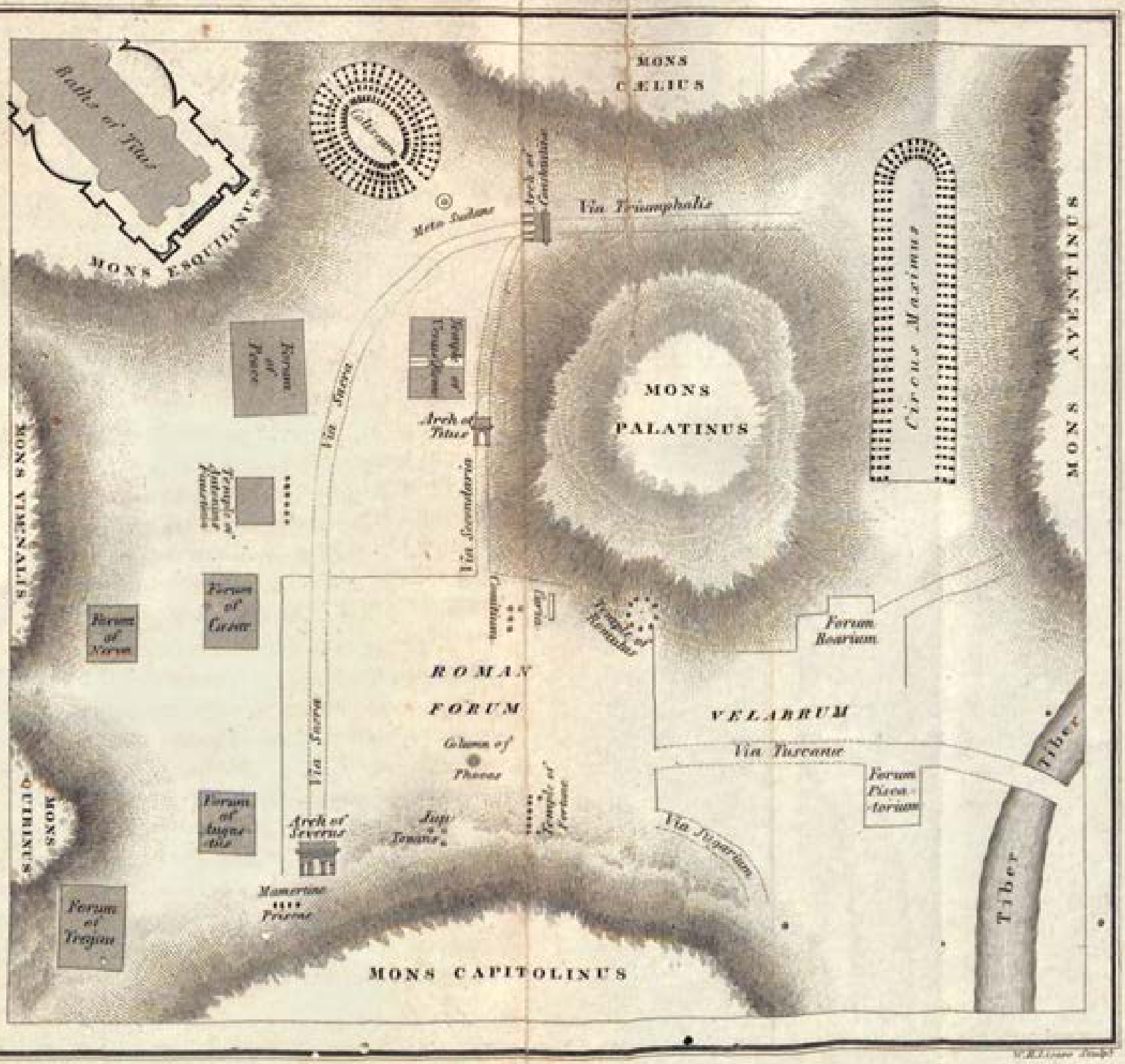
FRENCH taste, which made a flower-garden round the mighty walls of the Coliseum, conceived the bright idea of converting the Roman Forum into a promenade. This they effected. Besides which, during the whole fourteen years that they had possession of Rome, they never ceased to talk of clearing out the Forum to its ancient level; nay, they actually did remove a fountain, and finish the excavation of the half-buried arch of Septimus Severus, and the columns of Jupiter Tonans, which the Pope had previously commenced.

Is not this one among the many proofs, that "La Grande Nation" always talked more magnificently than they acted?

We hear much in Rome of what the French intended to have done. We see very little that they did do. An impoverished people, and a ruined nobility, can bear witness to the enormous contributions they levied upon this city, but we see few memorials of its expenditure. You will not relish this doctrine, I know, but it is nevertheless true.

PLAN OF THE ROMAN FORUM,

ITS RELATIVE SITUATION & THE REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY STILL STANDING IN IT.



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Whatever the French may have been, however, the English, as far I see, are at present the most active excavators. There is the Duchess of D—— at work in one corner, and the Pope, moved by a spirit of emulation, digging away in another, while divers *Milor' Inglesi* are commencing their operations in as many different places; and so many gulfs are opening in the Roman Forum, without any apparent probability of a Curtius appearing to close them, that I cannot but groan over the destruction of the smooth green sod, on which the ruined temples and fallen capitals rested in such beautiful repose, and over the clanking of chains, and toiling of galley slaves, that profane the affecting solitude of a spot once sacred to freedom.

If these discoverers, instead of each chusing, like so many anglers, their own little particular spot according to their own fancy, would act upon one combined plan,—if they would remove the barns and mean modern buildings that now disgrace the Forum,—fairly carry away the soil that fills it up, and clear it out to the level of the ancient pavement, —some good might come of it, and antiquarians at least would have reason to rejoice. But as long as they continue to make holes in it, and to pile up all the rubbish they take out of one place on the top of another, which may just as likely contain the very object they are in search of, I cannot but think that they are doing more harm than good, especially as the surface they cover with rubbish far exceeds the space they clear. It would require a Hercules to

remove the unsightly mountains they have already raised.

The Pope readily grants permission to all sorts of persons to excavate as much as they please, and wherever they please; but he does not give them any great encouragement, for he takes to himself the half of whatever they find; and what is far worse, he will not allow any piece of antiquity, however small, to be carried out of Rome: Not a leg of an old statue, nor a scrap of a basso relievo, nor a broken-headed bust, will he suffer to escape him. The finder may sell it in Rome, but may not take it away. Now, as most of our countrymen, who dig and delve in this manner, wish to carry the fruits of their labour to embellish their own country, this law acts almost as a prohibition to their exertions.

An English nobleman, who did not count upon the strict enforcement of this rule, lately dug up an old Sarcophagus, and was preparing to carry off his prize, when its exit was stopped by the Dogana; nor could his holiness be induced to grant permission for its passage, although Sarcophagi are so common in his states, that you cannot enter a Vignarolo's hovel in Rome or the Campagna, without seeing the pigs eating out of these sculptured marble memorials of the mighty dead.

However, though nothing ancient can be carried off with the Pope's permission, much may be carried off without it. A silver key at Rome will unlock many gates; and should this fail, an

old statue can sometimes make an elopement over the walls of the city in the dead of the night, with an activity very unsuited to its age and gravity.

The present surface of the Forum is from fifteen to twenty feet above its ancient level. You may descend into any of the various excavations that are making in it, and amongst chained couples of galley slaves, that are labouring, cursing, and begging, in the same breath, you may stand upon the ancient pavement of the Roman Forum, where Brutus and Cato and Tully once trod. That you tread it now, is indeed almost all that you can be secure of, after the most unwearied enquiries. All except its site is uncertain, and that is fortunately so clearly ascertained by such a multitude of classical authorities, that it can admit of no doubt. I might cite Livy, Propertius, Plutarch, and a crowd of other testimonies,—but is there a page of the domestic history of Rome that does not point out the site of her Forum as between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills? And can it be necessary to take so much pains to prove what is alike undisputed and undisputable? Indeed, on the spot, a thousand local proofs, if proofs were wanting, press conviction on the mind, which at a distance cannot be comprehended.

I have subjoined a little plan of the Forum and the surrounding hills, with a very few of the most interesting objects whose site is ascertained, or whose ruins remain, which may probably give you some idea of their local situation.

Anciently there were Forums, or, to speak more

correctly, Fora, of two kinds,—the Fora Venalia, answering to our markets for the sale of different commodities, such as the Forum Boarium, Olitorium, &c. &c.; and the Fora Civilia, for the transaction of public business. Of these, Republican Rome had only one, which was called *the* Forum, *par excellence*, or the Roman Forum. It was the focus of the factions, the politics, the intrigues, the virtues, the crimes, and the revolutions of Rome. It was the haunt of her orators, her philosophers, and her statesmen; the scene of her elections, and the theatre of her greatness. Here were held the comitia, or assemblies of the people; here stood the Rostra from which the orators harangued them; the Curia, or Senate-house; the Basilica, or Courts of Justice; the public tribunals; the statues and memorials of great men; and some of the most sacred temples of religion.

While the constitution of Rome continued unimpaired, this was its heart—its centre. But when her freedom, her ancient virtue, and early simplicity, were no more,—when, from the sound body of a vigorous Republic, she became the head of an overgrown empire, *the* Forum no longer sufficed. Another was built by Julius Cæsar, which bore his name; and his example was followed by Augustus, and by many of the emperors. But of these and of their remains we shall speak hereafter; at present let us direct our attention to the Roman Forum. We learn from Vitruvius, that unlike the Forums*

* I have throughout taken the liberty of Anglicising this word. I must write as I speak, and I cannot talk of *Fora*.

of Greece, which were square, the Forums of Rome, and of all the Roman cities, were oblong, being one-third longer than their breadth. Now, the breadth of the Forum, comprized between the bases of the Palatine and Capitoline Hills, being ascertained, its length has been found by this rule.

It extends from east to west along the base of the Capitoline Hill, and its four corners are fixed to be nearly at the Church of S^ta^ Martina and S. Luca on the north-east; that of Santa Maria della Consolazione on the north-west; the little Church of St Theodore, once the Temple of Romulus, on the south-west; and an unmarked point where the arch of the Fabii once stood, within the line of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, on the south-east. An imaginary line drawn between these four points will describe its (supposed) limits.

Even in its present state of desolation, and surrounded only with a few scattered monuments of its vanished splendour, the very names of which are lost in oblivion, it is something to feel that we stand upon the very site of the Roman Forum. Of these monuments, and indeed of all the ruins of Rome, very little is certainly known. The Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Obelisks, the three Triumphal Arches, and the two Triumphal Columns, tell their own story; but the great majority of temples, pillars, walls, and tombs, with the exception of a very few which bear inscriptions, are involved in doubt and perplexity; in endless conjecture and inextricable confusion.

Bitter, indeed, have been the battles that the anti-

quaries have waged about the remains in the Forum, not one of them has escaped discussion, and yet they are all as uncertain as ever. Indeed I must say, that the laborious researches and prolonged controversies of these learned gentlemen, have never yet ascertained the real name of any thing; and wherever that has been brought to light by the subsequent discovery of inscriptions, (as in the case of the tomb of the Scipios and the column of Phocas,) not one of their manifold suppositions has ever been verified. They have, however, christened every thing that wanted a name with a most bountiful variety, so that there is scarcely an old ruin of Rome that has not as many *aliases* attached to it, as ever fell to the share of any notorious offender at the Old Bailey. I have already lived long enough at Rome myself, to see the Temple of Jupiter Stator converted into the Comitium, and the Temple of Concord transformed into the Temple of Fortune. Thus, the delightful delusion which entranced me when I fancied that I stood on the very spot rendered sacred by the eloquence of Cicero, and knew not that a doubt existed of its truth, has vanished, "like the baseless fabric of a vision;" and ill is that blissful dream compensated by the cold hypothetical suppositions that have supplied its place. Some twenty years ago, indeed, it was suggested that this might possibly be the Temple of Fortune, but the proposition was then received with contempt; it continued to be called the Temple of Concord, and would to Heaven it had been allowed to remain so—especially as the grounds for

believing it either the one or the other, are purely presumptive, and it is more than probable it was neither. Whatever it was, however, I am compelled to acknowledge, and I do it with grief, that the present structure never existed in the days of Cicero. In the first place, at that period there were no temples of marble; and in the second, this temple is built of uncorresponding columns, apparently taken from various edifices; and from its defective proportions, and bad style of architecture, it is pronounced by a celebrated antiquary to be a work of the reign of Constantine the Great. Now, as it has no date, I ventured to suggest, that in however villainous a taste, it might surely have been built a few years, nay, even one single year, before his time; as he was apparently a more likely person to knock down Pagan temples than to build them up. No! The indignant antiquary more positively asserted it to be a work of his reign, and of no other; and thus, upon the sole evidence of its intrinsic deformity,—which, after all, I never could discover to be so very great,—simple people like me are required to believe that a Christian prince built a Pagan temple.

The three beautiful Corinthian columns of the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, which stand near this vilified portico, on what was the declivity of the Capitoline Hill, though its form and surface are now broken away, have only supposition for the name they bear; but fortunately no other has yet been found out for them; and their style of archi-

tecture, and their pre-eminent beauty, would seem to rank them as a monument of the Augustan age.

The solitary column which stands in the Forum, was called, by antiquaries, a part of the Temple of Jupiter Custos—of Vulcan—of the Bridge of Caligula—of any thing but what it proved to be, when the inscription on the pedestal was brought to light by the simple operation of digging out the earth,* and it was found to be a column dedicated by a Greek Exarch to the Emperor Phocas, in the seventh century. As the arts at that period were at their lowest ebb, it is conjectured that the column itself, which is far too good for such an age, must have been taken by the Exarch from some ancient edifice, to serve his adulatory purpose.

The three beautiful columns near the base of the Palatine Hill—the same that I told you were remains of the Temple of Jupiter Stator, but of which nothing is certain, except that they are the purest and most faultless models of the Corinthian order now in the world, have had so many names, that at present, in order to prevent dispute, they are generally called, "the Disputed Columns;" for, by whatever name you happened to christen them in conversation, it was more than probable that the person you addressed knew them by some other; and, after mutual explanation, each party secretly pitied or despised the ignorance of his ac-

* This excavation was made by her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire.

quaintance. As for instance, somebody mentions the remains of the Temple of Jupiter Stator.

"Jupiter Stator!" exclaims his friend—"Where is it?—I never saw it."

"Impossible! Never saw the three beautiful columns in the Forum, where they are excavating the marble staircase!"

"O, that is the Temple of Castor and Pollux."

"I beg your pardon," interposes a third; "it is thought, upon the best authority, to be a part of Caligula's bridge."

"Caligula's bridge!—Nay, that is impossible, however; for it was destroyed nearly as soon as himself. I believe it is now considered a part of the Curia."

"Say rather the Comitium, which was in front of the Curia," rejoins another. And so they go on. Thus "the Disputed Columns," as they are now called, by general consent, to avoid these endless altercations; after passing through multifarious designations as remains of every imaginable variety of temple, are at last not allowed to be any temple at all, but are pronounced to have belonged to the Comitium;* and thus, opinion, which goes round like the hand of a clock, now stands at the same

* The Comitium was originally an uncovered building, but in A.U. 540, it was covered with a roof.—(Livy, lib. xxvii. c. 36, Dec. iii.) When rebuilt by Cæsar and Augustus, it was surrounded with a peripteral portico of fifteen columns at the sides, and eight at the fronts. The Comitia, or assemblies of the people for the election of the subordinate priests and magistrates, were held here. The Comitia for the

point it did about fifty years ago, when all the leading antiquarians of the day echoed Nardini's assertion, that they belonged to that building. In this instance, I almost think, or at least hope, that they have for once stumbled upon the truth. I should be sorry to trouble you with a long disquisition to prove it, and I am convinced you would be content to believe it to be any thing sooner than listen to it; but as the Comitium is known to have been nearly at the base of the Palatine Hill, immediately in front of the Curia, and considerably elevated above the Forum, from which a flight of steps led up to it; these columns exactly answer the description; for they are so far elevated above the ancient Forum, as to be on a level with the present surface; the marble steps in front of them have been brought to light by the recent excavation; and they are exactly in front of the lofty brick wall of the Curia, at the foot of the Palatine Hill. "But is this wall, the wall of the Curia?" I hear you ask. That indeed may be disputed, but it occupies the site that every concurring testimony seems clearly to assign to the Roman Senate-house, or the Curia Julia, as it was called, because begun by Julius Cæsar, though finished by Augustus. It

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election of the Consuls, and all the superior priests and magistrates, were held in the Campus Martius, where the people were assembled in small square inclosures, called Septa, from their resemblance to sheep-folds, each tribe having one. These Septa were of wood during the republican age, but Agrippa built them of marble; and, in compliment to Augustus, called them Septa Julia.

replaced the Curia Hostilia, which took its name from Tullus Hostilius. It is marked in one of the fragments of the ancient plan of Rome; and before it is a part of the Comitium, with its colonnaded front, and steps leading up to it, exactly corresponding to these "Disputed Columns." They are, by all critics, ascribed to the Augustan age, another reason for believing them a part of the Comitium, which we know was built by Augustus, and which we do not know was afterwards rebuilt. The Consular Fasti, too, were found here, and it is obvious that either the Curia, or Comitium, was the most probable situation for them.* I could find abundance of other reasons for believing it, but truth—for which I have some regard, even when it shakes a favourite hypothesis—compels me to observe, that the Temple of Castor and Pollux stood at the base of the Palatine, as well as the Comitium, and that it also must have had steps leading up to it; for Plutarch mentions,† that when Cato entered the Forum, he saw the steps of that temple covered with gladiators, and at the top of them, Metellus seated with Cæsar. Thus my proofs will do, in some sort, for either side of the question, though they preponderate on the side of the Comitium.

This Temple of Castor and Pollux was built on the margin of the Lake Juturna, where the two

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* Vide Panvinius. Some additional fragments of the Fasti have also come to light in the present excavation.

† In his Life of Cato.

heavenly youths, who brought, with preternatural speed, the annunciation of the victory of the Romans over the Latins, at the Lake Regillus, after watering their foaming steeds, disappeared in its waters before the eyes of the astonished multitude, and were recognised as the Dioscuri. This lake, which must have been either a little pond or a swamp, (viz. the Velabrum) was very soon drained, but the Temple remained till the latest times.

It was rebuilt by Augustus, and dedicated by Tiberius.* Caligula used its portico for the entrance of the palace he built on the Palatine:† therefore, it must have been at the very base of that hill, and nearer to it than these three columns.

Of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, there are, therefore, no remains; and the ruins I have now enumerated—consisting of the Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus, and the Temple of Concord, or Fortune, at the base of the Capitoline Hill; the solitary column of the Emperor Phocas; the ruined wall of the Curia, and these three "disputed," or reputed, columns of the Comitium, at the base of the Palatine;—are the only remains of antiquity that now stand within the limits ascribed to the Forum.

Of the immense number of buildings of all sorts which once stood there—since the toilsome repetition of all their names could answer no good end that I know of, except to set you to sleep—I will spare you the enumeration, and only notice one or

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* Tacitus Ann. † Suetonius in Cai. Cal.

two of the most remarkable. Behind the Curia, at the base of the Palatine Hill, but, according to some authorities, without the Forum, was the Græcostasis, or the hall in which the foreign ambassadors awaited the deliberations of the Senate; and it doubtless derived its name from the Grecians, who, in the early ages of Rome, were the only ambassadors sent to the State. The Basilica Porcia, the most ancient basilica in Rome, (built by Cato the Censor) adjoined the Curia Hostilia, and was burnt down with it during the tumult raised by the populace after the murder of Clodius, when they tore up the benches and tables in the Senate-house and lighted his funeral-pile upon its floor.*

The Rostra stood near the Curia and Comitium, and in a central part of the Forum. A spot covered with the triangular point of an awkward old barn, or granary, is conjectured to have been its republican site, for it is said to have been removed by the crafty policy of Cæsar, from the centre to a corner of the Forum, in order that the orators might not be so well heard by the people. It was not, as I had imagined, a small pulpit, but an elevated building, large enough to contain a considerable number of people; as appears from a medal, on which it is represented, adorned with the rostra, or beaks of ships, that gave it its name.†

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* Vide Cicero's Life, by Middleton.

† In the fifth century of the republic, all the ships were taken from the conquered and rebellious colony of Antium, and the rostra, or prows of those which were burnt, were

At the base of the Palatine Hill, surrounded with the Sacred Grove, and enclosed with a wall, stood the Temple of Vesta, and the House of the Vestal Virgins, to which the Regia of Numa served as a portico. The Sacred Grove, indeed, must have been very small, and the house of the vestal virgins might not have been very large; as, at their first institution by Numa Pompilius, they were only four in number, and never exceeded six; yet still, as they were virgins of the highest rank, they must have had suitable accommodations, and it is very difficult to find room for them here. This house, temple, and Sacred Grove, however, are supposed to have stood at the base of the Palatine. At its base also, and forming the south-western corner of the ancient Forum, stood the Temple of Romulus, and the sacred Ficus Ruminalis, beneath the shade of which the twins were reared by the wolf, and which, according to Tacitus, in the days of the Cæsars, was still flourishing. The odd-looking little Church of St Theodore, or St Toto, as he is vulgarly called, is supposed to occupy the exact site of the temple; and the singularity, and even the meanness of its form, is adduced as one proof of the fact, because the structures sacred to Romulus were religiously preserved to the latest times, in their primitive state; and even the straw-roofed

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hung around the Tribune of Public Harangues in the Forum, which, from thence, bore the name of Rostra. We sometimes find it called *Templum*, having been consecrated as such by the Augurs.—Vide Livy, lib. viii. c. 14.

cottage—the Casa Romuli—is said to have been rebuilt in unaltered simplicity. The Christians, on converting this temple into a church, perhaps continued to keep it up in the same form, from convenience or habit. Indeed, this was in conformity to their usual custom, for they even put porticos before the churches they built themselves, to assimilate them as much as possible to the pagan temples, and adopted altars, images, and every thing pagan, till at last they paganised Christianity.

But another, and a far stronger proof of the identity of the church and the temple, is furnished by the curious fact, that in pagan times it was the custom for diseased, or weakly children, to be brought to the Temple of Romulus for cure; and, to this day, mothers bring their rickety offspring to this shrine to work their restoration. The canonized Toto has succeeded to the deified Romulus. The miracles are the same; and, except in name, in what respect is the faith altered? The fact of the bronze statue of the Wolf and the Twins,* now in the Capitol, being found here, is, of itself, a strong presumption that this was the real site of the Temple of Romulus; and indeed it answers, in all respects, to every description of the situation of that revered spot where the twins were suckled by the wolf; and though there is apparently one obvious objection to the supposition, which is, that it is not upon the Tiber; it must be remembered that it was upon the Velabrum, or marsh formed by its stag-

* The Wolf only is ancient; the Twins modern.

nating waters, which, before it was drained, was so deep as to be crossed by a ferry, and which is even yet liable to be overflowed during the great floods that frequently occur after the autumnal rains.

It seems, therefore, reasonable enough to conclude, that the odd little Church of St Toto occupies the site of the Temple of Romulus. But the antiquaries believe—for what, in some cases, will they not believe, and in others will they not doubt? —that not only the Temple of Romulus, but the Græcostasis, the Temple of Vesta, the House of the Vestal Virgins, and Regia of Numa, with the Sacred Grove; the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the Curia, the Comitium, and the Basilica Portia—all these buildings, nay, more than these—stood all together in the Forum, and at the base of the Palatine Hill, although only one little corner adjoins it!

Near the Temple of Castor and Pollux was the Temple of Julius Cæsar, and the market for slaves.* Thus, on the very spot where one man was elevated to the rank of a god, thousands were sold like brutes. Yes, even here, on the very soil and focus of freedom, and while the air resounded with the tide of immortal eloquence that was poured forth in its sacred name, slaves were publicly sold in chains! I could not pass this spot without the reflection, that where I now stood, gazing upon the ruins of Roman greatness, thousands of my countrymen had once been sold into slavery. The cap-

* Seneca in Sapient. c. 13.

tives brought from Britain, as part of the booty that Cæsar gained in his expedition thither, met this fate.* How little did those proud masters of the world then dream, that thousands from that obscure and barbarous island, when it had become the seat of knowledge, refinement, virtue, and civilization, such as they never knew, should one day freely seek this spot, when their name, their power, their laws, their language, and their gods, had vanished from the earth!

On the same side of the Forum (the west) stood the Basilica Sempronia, and more buildings than I have patience to enumerate; and at the north-western corner, on the spot where now stands the Church and Hospital of Santa Maria della Consolazione, is said to have been the Basilica Julia, built by Julius Cæsar with that magnificence that characterized every public work of his erection.

On the north side of the Forum was the Temple of Saturn, or the Public Treasury, of which Pompey carried away the key when he fled from the city, and Cæsar broke open the doors as soon as he arrived at it. In front of it was the gilded column, the Milliarium Aureum,† on which the distances of the great Roman roads were marked in

* Strabo (lib. iv.) records this fact, of which no mention is made by Cæsar in his Commentaries, probably because it was a matter of course; for the sale of the prisoners taken in war, formed a considerable part of the booty of the conquerors.

† Tacitus (Hist. lib. i.) mentions that it stood before the Temple of Saturn.

miles. This mile-stone, if I remember right, was first placed there by Augustus; but one of the Gracchi had the merit of proposing this mode of measurement.

Near this, stood the Triumphal Arch of Tiberius, erected in honour of that emperor, in consequence of the glorious recovery of the Varian Eagles, and the great victories obtained in Germany by Germanicus, under his auspices,* although he was himself all the while in Rome. A mighty easy way of gaining glory this! On this side of the Forum was also the Scuola Xantha, which sounding name meant nothing more than the station of the Public Notaries.

The Church of St Martin and St Luke, at the north-eastern corner of the Forum, is, not on the very best authority, (that of an inscription found near it,) said to stand on the scite of the *Secretarium Senatus*, where the writings of the Senate† were kept. By the vulgar it is called the Temple of Mars, with more appearance of reason; for the beautiful Temple of Mars the Avenger, erected by Augustus, formed the principal building of his small but magnificent Forum, which certainly lay behind this church, if it did not occupy its site, and the place bears the name of Marforio to this

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* Vide Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii.

† I don't exactly know what writings these were. We find it recorded at an early period of the Republic, that the *decrees* of the Senate were always to be brought to the Temple of Ceres. Livy, lib. iii. c. 55.

day.* It has been shrewdly suspected, not only that the Church of Santa Martina has usurped the place of the Temple of Mars, but that the saint herself is no other than the blustering god in petticoats.† The inscription on the church says,

> Martirii gestans Virgo Martina Coronam,
> Cincto hinc Martis Numine Templa tenet.

Next door to Santa Martina, is the Church of St Adrian, not the deified emperor of that name, though he had a temple somewhere hereabouts, but Pope Saint Adrian the First. For my part, conceiving it quite as reasonable to build temples to emperors as to popes, I should have just as much reverence for the one as for the other; but it is amusing to see the worship formerly paid, perhaps on this very spot, to a pagan emperor, transferred to a christian pontiff. The idolatry the same, and, as it happens, even in name unchanged.

The antiquaries will have this church to be the Basilica of Paulus Æmilius, for no earthly reason but because it has an old brick wall, and had gates of ancient bronze; as if the wall and the gates might not have belonged to any other of the various buildings which stood on the east side of the Forum. I should be glad to know where is the

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* So does the colossal statue of a river god, which used to stand here, and was the vehicle of the answers to the sallies of Pasquin's sarcastic wit. It is now in the Museum of the Capitol.

† In the same way, a certain St Apollonaris, to whom a church, in another part of Rome, is dedicated, is conjectured to be the Pagan god converted into a Christian saint.

probability that the Basilica of Paulus Æmilius has stood out all the conflagrations, battlings, and destructions, that have taken place here since his time; or if it did, that this paltry old wall formed a part of that splendid structure?* This church has also been called the Temple of Saturn, a still more unfortunate supposition, for there is abundance of proof that it stood on the north side of the Forum. In short, what the old wall of this church belonged to, it is perfectly impossible now to ascertain, nor does it signify.

On this side of the Roman Forum (the east,) there are no other remains which even antiquarian credulity can assign to Roman times. The Temple, Ædicola, or Altar, of Venus Cloacina, for antiquaries have never settled which she possessed, stood nearly at the south-east extremity of the Forum. Here, too, must have been the tribunal of Appius, for it is related that Virginius snatched a knife from a shop-board close by, and that the unfortunate Virginia fell beneath his murderous blow, at the base of the statue of the goddess.

In later times, Julius Cæsar, it is said, was her high-priest, and lived near her shrine.†

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* Plutarch, in his Life of Paulus Æmilius, calls it one of the most superb edifices of the city.

† It is well known that Julius Cæsar proclaimed himself to be descended from Venus, (see his Oration on the Death of his Aunt, in his Life by Suetonius,) thereby, perhaps, artfully suggesting to the minds of the Romans, his affinity to their great Trojan founder. In the same manner, Augustus pretended that he was the son of Apollo, and that the god had assumed the form of a serpent for the purpose of giving him birth. Vide Suetonius' Life of Augustus.

Along the whole line of the south side of the Forum, not a single vestige now remains of any building, ancient or modern, excepting the three beautiful columns of the Comitium, at its south-west corner, beneath the Palatine, of which I have already spoken.

At the south-east corner of the Forum, exactly within the line of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, once stood the Arch of Fabius the Censor, erected in honour of his victory over the Allobroges,* of which not a trace remains.

Beneath this vanished arch the Via Sacra entered the Forum, and the antiquaries having got it from thence through the existing one of Septimius Severus, tell us it then turned to the left, but how to get up the Capitoline hill to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, they are wholly at a loss. Now, since the whole face of the hill has evidently tumbled down, I think it is no great wonder that the road has disappeared. However, for want of a better place, some of them conceived that it must have passed between the porticos of the Temples of Concord (alias Fortune,) and Jupiter Tonans, which are at right angles with, and a very few feet distant from, each other. A recent excavation here having brought to light a pavement of large round stones between the two temples, the proposition

* I need scarcely observe that they were a people of considerable importance in Gaul, frequently mentioned by Cæsar, and the same who were afterwards concerned in the conspiracy of Catiline.

that this is the real Via Sacra, is triumphantly maintained by one party of antiquaries, whilst it is contemptuously sneered at by another. I have nothing to do with their squabbles, but common sense seems to rebel against the possibility of four horses a-breast being squeezed into such a narrow space. While we were discussing the point, and stretching our necks over the hole, it occurred to me that a coachman was a much better judge of the practicability of the passage, than all the antiquaries in the world; and seeing an English brother of the whip whom we knew, driving his tilbury, 'dennet, or some such vehicle, up and down the avenue of trees in the Forum, which he called the Via Sacra; we agreed to refer the question to him. He could not at first be made to understand or believe, that the Romans drove their four-in-hand, four-a-breast; however it made no difference in his decision.

"*That* a road!" he exclaimed; "why, Lord help you, I would not engage to drive a wheel-barrow tandem along it. Four-a-breast indeed!—I'll bet you what you please you don't even drive a pair. The thing's impossible!—Why, don't you see it would smash my tilbury?" And away drove the dandy, laughing at us, as well he might, for a parcel of simpletons, for proposing such a question; and convinced in his own mind that the Romans were little better, if they really drove four-a-breast as we pretended.

That the Via Sacra *did* ascend to the summit of the Capitol, is, however, a matter of historical fact,

although neither our friend the dandy, nor any of the antiquaries, nor yet our own wise heads could settle how. It is also certain, that it wound round this site of the hill, and indeed no other is accessible, except for foot passengers. I cannot myself see why it might not have gone where the road for carriages now goes, behind the Temple of Concord, (I mean Fortune,) which is a very gentle ascent. However, I won't pretend to give any opinion.

Of course, there can be no vestige of the memorable Gulf of Curtius, which opened, as we are told, in the centre of the Forum, because it closed upon him. But something there was, called the Lake of Curtius, even in the days of the Emperor Galba, because he was killed there.* But this must have related to Curtius the Sabine, who stuck fast in a swamp in the Forum.†

The Pila Horatii, on which the spoils of the Curatii were heaped; the rostral column to Caius Duillius, the first Roman who ever gained a naval victory; all the public tribunals; an incredible number of statues; the Temple of Apollo, mentioned by Plutarch; the Temple of Augustus, of Vespasian, and of Hadrian; the consecrated ground of Vulcan, in which stood *that* Temple of Concord which was dedicated by C. Flavius;‡—temples, in short, without number, and basilicas without end, stood somewhere in the Forum. To recapitulate all the buildings which are said, and perhaps on

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* Tacitus, Hist. lib. i. † Vide Livy, lib. i.
‡ Livy, lib. ix. c. 46.

just grounds, to have been contained within it, —since it surpasses the limits of human comprehension to conceive where they found room—would only be fruitlessly to exhaust your patience, which I must already have severely tried. One conclusion, however, common sense dictates—either that these buildings never did stand here at the same time, or that the limits of the Forum must have been very considerably greater than those at present ascribed to it.

The Forum was, besides, surrounded with shops, chiefly of bankers, (Argentariæ Tabernæ,) and with porticos.*

But we must not only find space for the buildings, but for the people. The whole Roman populace seem at times to have been convened here. Here they assembled for the election of inferior priests and magistrates, for the hearing of causes, the trial of accused citizens, and the attendance on popular harangues. It was here, when Scipio was accused by the country he had saved, that, for all reply, he turned towards the Capitol, and called upon his fellow-citizens to follow him to the Temple of Jupiter, "the best and greatest," there to return thanks to the immortal gods, under whose auspices he had, on the anniversary of that very day, conquered Hannibal, and delivered Rome. The people followed him with enthusiastic plaudits, and his accuser was left alone.†

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* Livy, lib. xli. 27, and xxvi. 11.

† Livy, Dec. iv. lib. xxxviii. c. 51.

It was here, in times of alarm and commotion, they beset the doors of the Senate-house; and here, in the struggle between contending parties, at the election of opposing candidates, or the passing of contested laws, they found room to fight; it was the frequent theatre of frays, tumults, popular commotions, wounds, and bloodshed.

In the latter ages of the Republic, shews of gladiators were exhibited here to the people, especially at funeral games; and consequently, we may suppose that no small portion of the immense population of Rome was assembled to view a sport they delighted in so much. How, in a space so circumscribed, such buildings stood, and such scenes were acted, it is impossible for us to comprehend. But I must have done. Forgive, if you can, this unconscionable long letter. I do assure you I am not nearly so tiresome as the antiquaries; but this you will find it difficult to believe. Adieu.

LETTER XX.

FORUMS OF THE EMPERORS, AND THEIR REMAINS.—FORUM OF JULIUS CÆSAR, OF AUGUSTUS, AND OF NERVA OR DOMITIAN.—FORUM AND TRIUMPHAL COLUMN OF TRAJAN.—VESPASIAN'S FORUM OF PEACE.—FORUM OF ANTONINUS PIUS.—TRIUMPHAL COLUMN OF MARCUS AURELIUS.—TEMPLE OR BASILICA OF ANTONINUS PIUS.

From the Roman Forum, we must now turn to the Forums of the Emperors, which were chiefly situated to the east of it, and seem to have formed a sort of chain communicating with each other. The Church of St Adrian, is called *in tribus foris*, from the Roman Forum; and the Forums of Cæsar and Augustus, of which it forms the connecting point. From the title it bears, it would appear that after the time this old church was built, the sites of all the three Forums must have been open and apparent, although those of the two Emperors are now built up with streets and houses, and are no longer distinguishable. The Forum of Cæsar extended from the point where this church now stands to the south, behind the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, to the Church of S. Cosmo

and Damiano—or the Temple of Romulus and Remus—and in the court of that convent are still to be seen some massy walls, said to have formed a part of it, which are the sole vestiges of its former magnificence.

The Forum of Augustus—or the Forum of Mars, as it was called, from the splendid temple he erected in it to the avenging God of War*—was immediately behind the spot which the Church of S^ta^ Martina and S. Luca now occupies, and must have been at the very base, if not upon the Capitoline Hill. There are now no remains of it, except some fragments of walls said to have belonged to the Tabernæ, or shops, which encircled this, as well as every other Forum; and which, (though not worth looking at,) are to be seen behind the church, in the dirtiest court I ever was in. Really an antiquary, or rather an antiquity hunter at Rome, ought to have no olfactory nerves.

The ruin called the Temple of Peace, whether or not its claims to that title be allowed, must be considered as fixing the site of Vespasian's Forum of Peace; simply for this reason, that if we deny the said Forum a place here, where else shall we find room for it on the Via Sacra, on which we knew that it stood? Therefore, even if we must assign the building in question to a far later age, we must still believe it to have been built in, or on, the Forum of Peace.

* Mars Ultor.

Behind it, and probably communicating both with it, and with the Forum of Julius Cæsar, was the Forum of Nerva, some beautiful remains of which are still to be seen at the Arco Pantani. They consist of three fluted Corinthian columns, and one pilaster of Parian marble, fifty feet in height, and of the grandest and most perfect style of architecture. They are supposed to have formed part of the beautiful Temple of Nerva,—for every Emperor became a God as a matter of course,* and consequently had a temple. Nerva's Temple was built and dedicated by Trajan, who also enlarged the Forum; so that it was the work of three Emperors—or Gods; for it was originally begun by Domitian, continued by Nerva, whose name it bore, and finished by Trajan.

These noble remains perfectly accord with that grand style of architecture which revived under Trajan's reign, and which was in no respect inferior to that of the Augustan age. They were formerly much more considerable, but they were broken down, and carried away by Paul V. (who is even accused of having purloined seven columns,) in order to ornament his hideous Fontana Paolina on Mount Janiculum, where no human eye can now trace their perfection of beauty. But it is most true, that what the Goths spared, the Popes destroyed.

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* Vespasian once humorously observed when he was sick, "that he felt himself beginning to become a God."

The columns which still remain are flanked by a lofty wall, composed of large masses of Tiburtine stone, joined together without cement, which is supposed to have originally been a part of the boundary wall of the Forum, and is now surmounted by the tower of the adjoining convent.

A wall of precisely the same construction is still to be seen in that part of the Forum which was built by Domitian, in the ruin called the Temple of Minerva, a Goddess who was the object of that Emperor's constant and devoted idolatry.* This building consists of two marble Corinthian columns in front of this wall, more than half buried beneath the pavement, supporting a frieze richly sculptured with figures emblematical of the arts of Pallas; and in the centre of the perfect and highly ornamented entablature, stands the relievo of the goddess herself. The massive wall behind the columns has been broken into, to form a little dark dirty shop; and a cooper now works at his trade beneath the protection of the Goddess of Arts. Yet still, though she stands there to claim it as her own, it is not allowed to be her temple, nor indeed any temple at all.

"It has no constituent part of a temple," say the antiquarians. "Where are the side-walls of the Cella? Where the Portico? These columns do not form one. They are merely intended to embellish some particular part of the Forum,—perhaps the centre, perhaps the entrance. The wall behind is evidently the boundary wall of the Forum,

* Vide Suetonius, in Vit. Domit.

the same as we see at the Arco Pantani; and as it was begun by Domitian, and consecrated by him to Pallas, there is no difficulty in accounting for her figure, and for the emblematical ones upon the frieze."

Whatever the building may be, the sculpture of the frieze, the whole entablature, and the columns, are beautiful. They are perhaps too beautiful, or at least too beautified; and in a style rather too florid for true taste; but the ornaments are strictly correct and appropriate; the only fault is, that they are in excess.

Critics consider this profusion of embellishment to be the distinguishing feature in the works of Domitian's reign. Under Trajan the arts regained their original purity, simplicity, and grandeur, and this true greatness of style characterizes every building of his erection, as we have already seen in the remains of the Temple of Nerva, and may still further observe in the Forum of Trajan, whither I shall now conduct you.

It is situated still more to the eastward, and is at the base of the Quirinal Hill, a part of which was cut down to form a level for it, as the inscription on the triumphal column records. That magnificent column has given the name of Piazza Trajana to the place in which it stands. But it comprises only a small part of the ancient Forum of Trajan, which extended beyond it in every direction, and now lies buried beneath the mean houses and streets of the modern city. The centre of the Piazza Trajana, around the base of the Triumphal

Column, has, however, been excavated down to the level of the ancient pavement by the French; and the wonders they brought to light, even by opening this small part of it, make one regret still more deeply that they did not continue their labours till they had restored it to its former bounds; but this never could have been their intention, for they walled in the space they cleared; a pretty convincing proof that they did not mean to enlarge it. And yet, the treasures of antiquity they might reasonably expect to have found, would probably have more than compensated, even in a pecuniary point of view, for the loss of the old houses and useless churches they must necessarily have removed: at all events, the re-opened Forum of Trajan in its original form, and filled with the relics of its ancient grandeur, would have been in itself invaluable, and a work worthy of the character to which they aspired. The present government unluckily is debarred from prosecuting such a design, for the head of the church cannot well knock down churches; but the French, who were troubled with no such scruples of conscience, need not surely have shewn so much tenderness for a few old musty shrines, in a city where there are nearly as many churches as houses, and quite as many dead saints as living sinners.

However, we certainly owe them some thanks for what they did, and it is perhaps rather an ungracious return for it to quarrel with them because they did not do more.

Let us descend into the space they cleared. Here we stand amidst the broken, but majestic columns of black oriental granite, once the supports of the Basilica Ulpia, which, after being buried for ages, are now arranged in long colonnades; and shattered as they are, reflect back no faint image of its ancient splendour. We tread upon the beautiful fragments of variegated marble, and we raise our eyes to that lofty triumphal pillar, the finest in the world, which has seen seventeen centuries of vicissitude pass away, and which still proudly towers in unchanged grandeur, recording in its sculptured rolls the deeds of victorious heroes whose existence is forgotten, and the submission of conquered nations whose names have long since vanished from the earth.

An account of the Forum of Trajan was written by Pausanias, and poor indeed will be my substitute for it; all I can promise you is, that if mine be less learned, it shall also be less long.

Of all the Forums of Ancient Rome, this was confessedly the most magnificent. It was built by Apollodorus, that celebrated Greek architect, whom Hadrian afterwards put to death for criticizing his plan of the Temple of Venus and Rome.

Every ancient Forum had at least one Temple for the purposes of religion, one Basilica for the administration of public justice, and one Portico for the transaction of business. It does not appear that the Forum of Trajan, or of any other of the Emperors, had more; the Roman Forum alone had several of each.

Unlike the generality of Forums, however, which were surrounded by the buildings, while the middle was left open, as our squares and market-places are built now—the Forum of Trajan had its buildings in the centre, and a wide open space was left around them; the whole was enclosed with a lofty wall, and with arcades.

The entrance,* which was at its most southern extremity, passed under the Triumphal Arch of Trajan, the same from which, it is generally believed, these beautiful columns and bassi relievi were torn, which adorn the Arch of Constantine. If we may believe some old writers, however, this arch, and the whole Forum of Trajan, were standing, in perfect integrity, long after the erection of the Arch of Constantine; and in this case, it must have been some one of the many arches that were erected in honour of Trajan, in the provinces that Constantine plundered of these master-pieces of sculpture we now admire upon his own; for it is not probable that there was ever more than one at Rome, even to this best of emperors. Be this as it may, at the entrance of the Forum stood the Triumphal Arch; at the farther extremity stood the Temple of Trajan, with the Triumphal Column in front of it; and in the centre, the Basilica Ulpia,

* The entrance is supposed to have been nearly at the spot now occupied by the little church of Santa Maria, in Campo Carleo, which stands a little beyond the limits of the present Piazza Trajana, and to the south of it.

the principal building it contained, and one of the most splendid and beautiful which even that age of taste and magnificence could boast.

Its length lay from east to west, across the breadth of the present piazza, and it is supposed to have extended beyond it. The entrances were not, as usual, at the end, but at the side; a variation which was probably dictated by local convenience. The steps that once led up to it may still be traced,* and broken fragments of the solid Giallo Antico marble, of which they were composed, are still strewed around.

This Basilica consisted of three naves. That in the centre was supported by columns of Pavonazzetto marble, and the two side ones by columns of black oriental granite, with bases and capitals of Parian marble. It is amidst their ruins that we now stand, and at our feet are fragments of the broken shafts of the Pavonazzetto columns. The shattered slabs of the same marble, and of Giallo Antico, which here and there cover the ground, once formed the richly variegated pavement of this splendid Basilica.

The Bibliotheca Ulpia, that celebrated library which Trajan placed here, and which was afterwards removed to the Baths of Diocletian, was contained in two wings or buildings, attached to the Temple of Trajan, which was situated behind (or

* Near that end of the present Piazza (the southern) the most remote from the Triumphal Column.

on the north side of) the Triumphal Pillar. Its portico was formed of eight immense columns of oriental granite. We measured one of the massive fragments of these which were laying about, and found it six feet in diameter; it must therefore have been about seventy-two in height. Some broken masses of a cornice and pediment of white marble, of exquisite workmanship, which from their proportions seem to have belonged to the Temple, were piled up round the wall of the excavation. They would be invaluable models to artists.

An inscription was found in the late excavation, which is still preserved here, from which it appears that the column was not erected till a year after the rest of the Forum. On the front, or south side of the column was a Cavædeum, or open court, inclosed by a double colonnade.

But my feeble description can scarcely give the faintest idea of the unparalleled splendour of this Forum. Besides the famous Equestrian Statue of Trajan, in bronze, which excited the envy and admiration of Constantine, when, on viewing it, he uttered the vain wish "that he had such a horse," and was told in return, "that he must first build him such a stable;" it was crowded with statues of marble, of bronze, and of ivory,—of the great and the learned,—of heroes and of gods.

You ascend by an easy winding staircase of solid Parian marble, lighted by loop-holes that are scarcely distinguishable from without, to the summit of the Triumphal Column, where you find yourself just at the toe of St Peter, whose bronze statue

Sixtus V. elevated to this somewhat ludicrous post. From the top of the column you may see the remains, by courtesy called the Baths of Paulus Æmilius, although there is not the least reason to believe he ever built any baths at all, and these walls are evidently nothing more than a part of the corridor, or arcade, that encircled this Forum, and here formed its eastern boundary. At a corresponding distance from the column, on the opposite side, similar vestiges were found beneath some old houses, which must have formed its western enclosure.

The remains of Trajan were entombed either at the base, or at the summit of his Triumphal Column, for authorities differ on that point, though it seems most probable that it was the former; but the golden urn that contained his ashes has long since disappeared.

A little to the north of the Forum of Trajan, was that of Antoninus Pius, in the midst of which the Triumphal Column of Marcus Aurelius still lifts its proud head, entwined with his sculptured roll of victories, challenging comparison with the Pillar of Trajan.

Noble as it is, we must, after long and careful comparison, pronounce it inferior to that unrivalled monument of art. The bas reliefs upon either of them, cannot be satisfactorily examined by the naked eye, from the minuteness of the scale, the distance at which they are viewed, and the spiral form in which they encompass the shafts from top to bottom. The engravings from them alone give a clear idea of them. The figure of Jupiter Plu-

vius is one of the most celebrated and most striking on the Column of Antoninus. The Catholic legend, which tells that this opportune torrent, which ensured victory to the emperor, was, even in his belief, drawn down by the prayers of his Christian soldiers—does not seem to receive much support from the honour of it being thus given to the watery Jove.

The inscriptions we now see on the pedestal of this column are modern, and were inscribed upon it by Sixtus V., when he recased it with marble. In these it is stated, that this column was dedicated by Marcus Aurelius to Antoninus Pius; an assertion in which I suspect his Holiness had neither authority nor probability to support him. There was a column indeed, dedicated by M. Aurelius and Lucius Verus, to Antoninus Pius, but it was an immense column, or obelisk, of red granite, with a pedestal of white marble, which was dug up in the reign of Clement XI., and employed by Pius VI. in the repair of that obelisk which now stands on Monte Citorio; but this triumphal column, which records the martial glory of the philosophic emperor, was dedicated to himself alone.

There are no other remains of this Forum, excepting the eleven beautiful Corinthian columns of Grecian marble, which have been converted, with so much taste and judgment, into the Custom-house, and are so ingeniously built up in its vile modern wall, that scarcely one half of them are visible. There can be no excuse, either for the French or the Pope, in not having removed this

vile Dogana to some one of the multifarious vacant tenements with which Rome abounds,—knocked down this hideous fabric, and restored the imprisoned columns to light and beauty.

Like most other ruins, this colonnade has passed through a variety of appellations, but as it stands in what was the ancient Forum of Antoninus Pius, it is believed to have formed one side of the Peripteral Temple he erected to himself. A singular excess of piety certainly.—I wonder if it was this egotistical worship that procured him the agnomen? But Antoninus Pius is not the only emperor who made himself a god while yet upon the earth. That diabolical madman, Caligula, built a temple to himself upon the Palatine, and had serious intentions of making his horse, as well as himself, the object of worship.* We know, too, that there was a temple to the deified Claudius, even in Britain, which stood near the Thames, on the scene of that memorable defeat the Roman army sustained from our ancestors.† We are indeed assured, that Tiberius, in one instance at least, declined the offered honour; so also did Augustus; but notwithstanding their modesty, temples and altars were erected to them, and to all the Cæsars, and their statues were carried in the sacred processions with those of the gods, even during their life-time. Some of them, indeed, were perhaps right in taking care they should be adored while they were

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* Suetonius, in Vita C. Cal. † Tacitus.

alive, since they were sure of being execrated after they were dead. These columns may with equal probability have belonged to the Basilica, as to the Temple of Antoninus Pius, both of which were in this Forum.

The sight of the stupendous Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, which alone stand triumphant over Time, while the proud trophies of a long list of tyrants are laid low in the dust, make us involuntarily admire the poetical justice displayed in the perfect preservation of those sublime monuments of the best and greatest emperors Rome ever produced—the sole—who deserved the victor's laurel, and the civic crown;—who united the praise of pre-eminent virtue to that of military glory;—and who, on a throne too often sullied with every vice and every crime that can disgrace human nature, were at once the conquerors of distant nations, and the fathers of their people.

LETTER XXI.

FORUM BOARIUM—JANUS QUADRIFRONTIS—LITTLE ARCH TO SEPT. SEVERUS—THE CLOACA MAXIMA AND FOUNTAIN OF JUTURNA.

In a deserted and lonely situation, and on a damp and grass-grown spot which was once the Forum Boarium, or market of Rome, stands the magnificent ruin of Janus Quadrifrontis. It received its name from having four similar fronts, in each of which there is an arch of entrance; it is, therefore, somewhat inaccurately styled *an* arch, for it consists of four arches, and, in technical language, perhaps it would be more properly termed a Compitum.*

It is the only one now remaining of the many Jani of Ancient Rome, which were common in every Forum, or market-place, to shelter the people from the sun and rain; and were, in short, exactly what exchanges, or market-houses, are in the busy parts of our towns.

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* So say Forsyth and many other authorities. Yet a Compitum was generally erected where four roads met, and that does not seem to have been the case here.

But widely does this differ in magnificence. It is built of immense blocks of Grecian marble, now so darkened and discoloured by time, that they look like aged and lichen-covered stone; but their grey and sober hues accord far better with its present ruinous and desolate appearance, than would all the bright polish of recent finish. I know few ruins more picturesque and venerable than this. Its niches are empty; its statues, its pillars, its sculptured monuments, are all destroyed; and wild weeds, thick matted bushes, and aged ivy, wave luxuriantly from its top, and cling to its grey walls.

During the long and bloody struggles of the domestic wars waged by the Roman barons in the dark ages, it was turned into a fortress by the Frangipani family, who erected the brick walls that we now see in ruins on its summit. That this arch is a work of Imperial Rome, there can be no doubt; but the date of its erection is purely conjectural. By many, it has been attributed to Domitian, and it is certain he built a great number of magnificent Jani in various parts of the city.* Others, judging from its style of architecture, pronounce it a work of later times.

The Forum Boarium, in which it stands, almost adjoined the Roman Forum, on the side nearest the Tiber, to the banks of which, however, it did not extend. It occupied a part of what was the Velabrum, or marsh, and which, indeed, though

* Suetonius, in Vit. Domit.

drained, ever since the days of Tarquin; still bears that name. The old church which stands here is called S. Giorgio in Velabro. By its side there is a little insignificant arch of marble, erected, as its inscription testifies, by the trades people and bench keepers of this Forum, to the Emperor Severus. It serves at once as a monument of their adulation and of their bad taste. The design is mean, and the sculpture barbarous. On one side is represented Sept. Severus, as high priest, in the act of sacrificing, with his wife Julia by his side. On the other is Caracalla, as a boy; but not a trace remains of the figure of Geta; a blank appears where it has been; for his name, his image, every thing relative to him, were effaced both from this arch, from the larger one in the Forum, and from every public monument, by command of his brother and his murderer.

Did he expect thus to erase the remembrance of his guilty fratricide?

I was assured that, on the site of the arch, there was the figure of a man ploughing with an ox and a cow, in commemoration of the tradition that it was from this point Romulus set out to trace the furrow round the Palatine Hill, which then described the boundaries of his infant city; but the sculpture was so defaced I could not make it out.

Below the figures of the Imperial family, are sculptured the different instruments used in sacrifice. We were a good deal amused to see them nearly the same as those in present use in the catholic church. The cap worn by the Flamens differs little from the mitre of the bishops; the simpulum and

the aspergillum used for the lustral water, are exactly like the basin and brush for the holy water; the accerra, or incense-box, is much the same as the censor; and the consecrated cake of Pagan sacrifice, differs in nothing from the consecrated wafer of high mass.

Solomon wisely said, "there was nothing new under the sun;" and what is a prefericula but a classical term for a jug; or a patera, but a more refined term for a saucer; and in what, after all, does holy water differ from lustral water, or saints from deified men; or the worship of images now, from that of statues formerly; or the Catholic from the Pagan rites?

But however close the similitude may be between their forms, I could not help feeling that their spirit is still widely different, and that even the gross corruptions of men had not had power to vitiate the divine influence of that religion which was derived from Heaven—when, in the midst of my flippant observations upon the Catholic worship, a tremendous proof of the horrors of Paganism, of which this very spot was the scene, burst upon my remembrance.

Yes, it was in this very Forum Boarium that the Romans twice offered up living sacrifices!—Two Gauls and two Greeks, a man and a woman of each nation, were twice buried alive here; first during a war with the Gauls, and then during the second Punic war, in compliance with the Sybilline books,—or rather in order to elude one of the predictions they contained, which was, "that Gauls and Greeks should possess the city;" and in

this way, by burying alive some of each nation, they pretended they were put in possession of it! as if the gods could be thus juggled out of their irreversible decrees!

Thus, eight human victims, innocent of crime, suffered the most cruel of punishments, to satisfy the guilty and barbarous superstition of the enlightened Romans. This horrible fact would be wholly incredible, if it were not supported by the authority of their own historians.*

There are no other remains of antiquity contained within the limits of this Forum, but there is one close to it, to which I shall now conduct you—the Cloaca Maxima, unquestionably the most ancient of all the ruins of Rome, and the only vestige of the work of her kings.

It was built by Tarquinius Superbus, and served not only as a common sewer to cleanse the city, but as a drain to the Velabrum, through which it passed.

This work was begun by Tarquinius Priscus, who "drained the low grounds of the city about the Forum, and the vallies lying between the hills, (the Palatine and Capitoline) by Cloacæ, which were carried into the Tiber."†

But the drain was imperfect, and the Cloaca Maxima we now see was built by Tarquinius Superbus.‡ It crossed the Roman Forum beneath the level of the pavement; and, in ancient times,

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* Vide Livy, Dec. ii. lib. xx. c. 34; and Plutarch's Life of Marcellus.

† Livy, lib. i. c. 38. ‡ Ibid. lib. i. c. 56.

it is said the tunnel was so large, that a waggon loaded with hay could pass through it. Now, all that we see of it is the upper part of a grey massy arch of peperin stone, as solid as the day it was built, through which the water almost imperceptibly flows. Though choked up nearly to its top by the artificial elevation of the surface of Modern Rome, it is curious to see it still serving as the common sewer of the city, after the lapse of nearly three thousand years.*

* Some architects, in order to support their improbable theory, that the construction of the arch was not known even in Greece (where the art had reached a perfection it will never more attain) till about a hundred years before the Christian era, have attempted to controvert the antiquity of this stupendous work, and attribute it to a much later period. But if it had really been rebuilt—as a late learned antiquary chose to imagine—by Augustus, would it have escaped the notice of Suetonius? or would the minute and accurate historian, who extols its grandeur and antiquity, and carefully chronicles the erection of every temple and basilica, have failed to record such a work as this, which must have been executed before his own eyes, and by the very prince in whose court he was living? But, on the contrary, he expressly says, "that Tarquin made the great Subterranean Cloaca to carry off the filth of the city, a work so vast, that even the magnificence of the present age has not been able to equal it." Livy, lib. i. c. 56. It may indeed seem incredible, that the Romans in that rude age should have been capable of executing such a noble piece of architecture; but Livy tells us, that "Tarquin sent for artists from all parts of Hetruria," for this and his other public works. Nothing can be clearer than this evidence of the Cloaca Maxima being the work of the Tarquins; and its denial only affords one of the many proofs,

When the Tiber, into which it flows, is flooded, the water in the Cloaca is driven back so as to rise above the key-stone of the arch, and hide it from view. When the Tiber is low, the arch through which it discharges its sordid flood into that river, may be seen from the Ponte Rotto; or, still more distinctly, from the river itself.

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that antiquaries will pervert, or overlook facts, when they interfere with their favourite theories. The Cloaca, therefore, is doubly interesting, not only from its extraordinary grandeur and antiquity, but from being perhaps the sole, and certainly the finest remains of Etruscan architecture that has come down to our times. With respect to the date of the introduction of the arch, since it was practised at this early period by the Etruscans, we cannot suppose it unknown to the Greeks. The earliest specimens extant of the arch, indeed, are formed in a very simple manner, by the inclination of two long blocks of stone erected on the lintels, and inclined till they meet each other in an angle, something like our small Gothic pointed arch. This occurs in one of the chambers of the great pyramid in Egypt, and in gateways among the ruins of Mycenæ in Greece, and also in the massy Cyclopean walls of the fortress of Tyrinthus, (which is built in the form of a ship,) situated on the road between Nauplia and Mycenæ, in which a vaulted passage of considerable length is arched in this manner throughout its whole extent. But the wide circular arches of the Cloaca Maxima are regularly built with the vault, key-stone, &c. and as entire as if finished yesterday. So also is the arch of the Emissarium of the Alban lake, built four hundred years before the Christian era, and consequently three hundred before the period of the invention of the arch, according to these theorists. The arch of Fabius at Rome too, and several more, must have preceded it considerably.

Almost close to the Cloaca Maxima, we were shewn the far-famed Fountain of Juturna,—that nymph on whom Jupiter thus conferred immortality. If this really be that transformed fair one, she has met with that neglect which is too frequently the lot of aged ladies; for the waters, which in her more youthful years were held sacred, and used only for the holy sacrifices of Vesta, now flow forgotten; and while a thousand fountains in Rome throw up streams unknown to fame, none has been erected for the classic source of Juturna. I tasted of the "crystal wave," and fancied it particularly fine.

LETTER XXII.

THE PANTHEON.

ROME presents no greater attraction to the stranger than the Pantheon, now the Rotonda, one of the largest and most beautiful temples of antiquity; the boast of the Romans themselves in the proudest era of their arts, and perhaps the only pagan temple in the world, which, after eighteen centuries have passed away, still preserves its primeval form and its ancient grandeur.

The beautiful solitude which surrounds the Coliseum, adds a secret charm to the pleasure we feel in surveying it. Not so the Pantheon. Its situation, on the contrary, tends as much as possible to dissolve the spell that hangs over it. It is sunk in the dirtiest part of Modern Rome; and the unfortunate spectator, who comes with a mind filled with enthusiasm to gaze upon this monument of the taste and magnificence of antiquity, finds himself surrounded by all that is most revolting to the senses, distracted by incessant uproar, pestered with a crowd of clamorous beggars, and stuck fast in the congregated filth of every description that covers the slippery pavement; so that the time he forces

himself to spend in admiring its noble portico, generally proves a penance from which he is glad to be liberated, instead of an enjoyment he wishes to protract.

We escaped none of these nuisances except the mud, by sitting in an open carriage to survey it; the smells and the beggars were equally annoying. You may perhaps form some idea of the situation of the Pantheon at Rome, by imagining what Westminster Abbey would be in Covent-Garden Market:—but I wrong Covent-Garden by such a parallel. Nothing resembling such a hole as this could exist in England; nor is it possible that an English imagination can conceive a combination of such disgusting dirt, such filthy odours and foul puddles, as that which fills the vegetable market in the Piazza Della Rotonda at Rome. Still, while I gazed upon the beauty of the Pantheon itself, I could not but remember that this noble monument of taste and magnificence was already built in those times when our savage ancestors still roamed through their native forests, scarcely raised above the level of the beasts they chaced; their very name unknown to all the world besides, excepting to the Romans, by whom they were considered much the same as the South-Sea islanders are by us.

The beauty of the Pantheon is as honourable to the ancient Romans as its filth is disgraceful to the moderns. But its present state of dirt and degradation is nothing to that from which it has emerged. There was a time when it was built round with beggarly hovels, when the very columns them-

selves, the admiration of every age, were walled up; and the portico, thus enclosed, was filled with stalls, booths, and hucksters' shops. Pope Eugenius the Fourth, about the middle of the fifteenth century, turned these "money changers and dove sellers out of the temple," and freed the imprisoned columns.

In far more guilty profanation, and even after its consecration as a church, it was converted into a temporary fortress during the furious struggle between popes and anti-popes, in the eleventh century; and thus the very temple, sacred to the worship of Him who brought "peace on earth," and shed his blood for man, was converted into the engine of war and carnage by his pretended representatives. The donation of the Pantheon for a Christian church, by the Emperor Phocas, and its consecration as such by Boniface Fourth,* seem to have afforded it no defence against the subsequent spoliations both of Emperors and Popes. The plates of gilded bronze that covered the roof, the bronze bassi relievi of the pediment, and the silver that adorned the interior of the dome, were carried off by Constans II. (A. D. 655) who destined them for his imperial palace at Constantinople; but being murdered at Syracuse on his return with them, they were conveyed by their next proprietors to Alexandria; and thus the spoils of the Pantheon, won from the plunder of Egypt after the battle of Actium, by a kind of poetical justice, re-

* A.D. 609—Vide Plotena's Life of that Pontiff.

verted to their original source. Urban the Eighth carried off all that was left to purloin—the bronze beams of the portico, which amounted in weight to more than forty-five millions of pounds. He records his plunder with great complacency, in an inscription on the walls of the Portico, as if it were a meritorious deed; seeming to pride himself on having melted it down into the frightful tabernacle of St Peter's, and the useless cannon of the Castle of St Angelo.* Urban, who was of the Barberini family, also gave a share of it to his nephew for the embellishment of the Barberini Palace; and this gave rise to Pasquin's sarcasm—

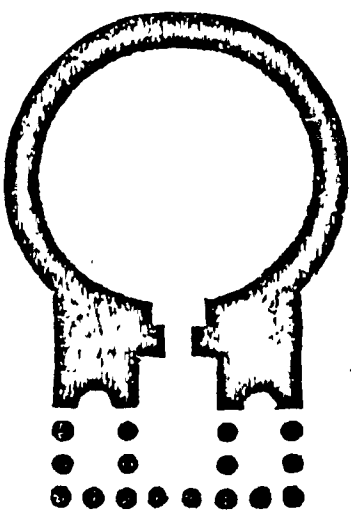
"Quod non fecerunt Barbari, Romæ, fecit Barberini."

But he did more mischief by adding than by taking away, for he bestowed upon it the deformity of two hideous belfries, as a perpetual monument of his bad taste.

The only meritorious action he performed was, replacing one of the three vanished columns of the Portico, which is marked on the capital with his bee. The other two were restored by Pope Alexander VII. and are graced with the star of the house of Chigi. These three columns are ancient, and are said to have been taken from the ruins of

* Besides this modern inscription in commemoration of its spoliation, there are two ancient inscriptions, one of which records its erection by Agrippa, the other its restoration by Septimius Severus and Caracalla.

the Baths of Nero, over which were built the neighbouring Palazzo Giustiniani, and the Church of S. Luigi de Francesi. Scarcely any difference or inferiority can be discerned between the supplied and the proper columns of the Portico. They are all of the Corinthian order, about forty-two feet English in height, and formed of the red granite of Elba, with white marble capitals, encircled with the graceful foliage of the acanthus. They are sixteen in number, eight in front, and eight behind, arranged in this form—



The two niches beside the door-way contained the statues of M. Agrippa* and Augustus.

* The only statue extant of M. Agrippa, which is now at the Palazzo Grimani at Venice, is believed to have been this identical statue.

That the Rotonda itself is of earlier erection than the Portico,—that it was built for a Thermal Hall, Caldarium, Tepidarium, Vestibule, or—something belonging to the Public Baths of Agrippa,—and that the Portico was afterwards added in order to convert it into a Temple,—antiquarians seem at last to have generally agreed. We observed, that the brick cornice of the Rotonda is continued quite round the body of the building; and it would undoubtedly have been broken off where the Portico commenced, if that had formed a part of the original plan.

Beautiful as the Pantheon is, it is not what it was. During eighteen centuries it has suffered from the dilapidations of time, and the cupidity of barbarians. The seven steps which elevated it above the level of Ancient Rome, are buried beneath the modern pavement, and instead of ascending, you now descend to enter it. Its Rotondo of brick is blackened and decayed; its leaden dome, overlooked by the modern cupolas of every neighbouring church, boasts no imposing loftiness of elevation; the plates of "glittering bronze" that once covered it have been torn away; the marble statues, the bassi relievi, the famed Caryatides,* have disappeared; its ornaments have vanished; its granite columns have lost their lustre, and its marble capitals their purity; all looks dark and

* The work of the Grecian sculptor Diogenes;—they were of bronze. Vide Pliny.

neglected, and its splendour is gone forever. Time has robbed it of the gloss and polish that can cheat the eye and trick the senses, or varnish over faults of taste with richness of decoration. Yet, under every disadvantage it is still beautiful—pre-eminently beautiful. No eye can rest on the noble simplicity of that matchless portico without admiration, and without feeling what is so rarely felt, that there is nothing wanting to desire, nothing committed to rectify. In viewing it, the eye does not feel that restless wish to remove one thing, to add another, to alter, to improve, that so often haunts it in looking even at fine buildings. It rests upon it with the fullness of satisfaction. It is the pure and perfect architecture, the greatness of design, the harmony, the simplicity, and the imposing majesty of the whole, that command our never satiated admiration, our approbation, and our praise. Its beauty is of that sort, which, while the fabric stands, time has no power to destroy.

Can we say the same of St Peter's?

But we linger too long at the threshold; let us pass through its open gates of ancient bronze, and enter the temple. How beautiful the proportions, how perfect the symmetry, how noble the design! The eye takes in at once the whole majesty of its magic circle, glances over the lofty columns of ancient marble that divide its parts, and, rising from the variegated pavement on which we tread, rests on that swelling dome whose top is open to the clear blue sky, and through which the light seems

to descend uninterrupted in its purest ray from heaven.

Who does not experience an elevation of soul in this ancient temple of the gods? Who does not feel, that man, who formed it, is allied to the divinity whom he here adores, and whose presence still seems to fill it? Be it

"Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,"

it is still the same, the one, great, and only God, that inhabiteth eternity.

How the long protracted dispute about the god or gods to whom it was dedicated, ever arose among the antiquaries, or why it is continued, I am at a loss to conceive, since Pliny, who must know more about it than they do, expressly says it was dedicated to Jupiter the Avenger.* If, therefore, it was ever destined by the adulation of Agrippa to the sole glory of Augustus, the honour must have been declined by his modesty or piety.† The name, the form, tradition, or some other cause, has given rise to the popular belief that it was dedicated to Jupiter, and all the gods of antiquity; but of this there is no proof; and it is inconsistent with the known principles of Pagan religion, which forbade a temple to be dedicated to more than one

* Jupiter Ultor, the designation of the God, is obviously in allusion to the battle of Actium, which, as an ingenious friend once observed to me, was the only naval engagement that ever decided the fate of an empire.

† Dio Cassius, lib. liii. c. 22.

divinity;* and enjoined, that even when vowed to two, as in the case of Virtue and Honour, Venus and Rome, Isis and Serapis, &c. a double temple should be raised, and one altar serve for their united worship. But though a temple could only be dedicated to one god, we know that it might contain small Edicolæ, or Chapels, for the worship of others; as the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, although dedicated to himself alone, contained the Edicolæ of Juno and Minerva, and the Altar of Terminus;† just as Catholic Churches are dedicated to the Virgin, or some particular saint; but have small side chapels appropriated to others. Indeed, the recesses and niches around the Pantheon, which are now sanctified in this way, are similar in form, though inferior in magnitude, to the great one fronting the door, where the image of Jupiter must have stood, and the High Altar now appears, and seem to indicate that they were formerly the Edicolæ, or Chapels of Pagan gods.

If the antiquaries had been left to themselves to find out to what deity this temple belonged, I make no doubt they would have assigned it to Vesta, both from its circular form and the aperture in the centre of the roof, both of which were proper to the temples of that goddess. Indeed, it is a favourite position with some of the leading antiquaries of the present day, that such an opening was peculiar to

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* Vide Plutarch—Life of Marcellus.

† Vide Livy, lib.

her temples;* and they get over the difficulty of finding it here by maintaining, that it was made when the Rotonda was intended for a hall of Agrippa's Baths, and that when converted into a temple, it was closed up with a colossal pine cone of bronze, (similar to one which is now in the Belvidere garden in the Vatican;) and such a pine, they pretend, stood in the Piazza della Rotonda, in the eleventh century.

Certainly the name of a neighbouring church—S. Ginseppe della Pigna—seems to corroborate the idea that there was a pine hereabouts; but then we have nothing but the lively imagination of antiquarians in support of the opinion that it was used to close up this orifice. Pliny, whose account of every part of the Pantheon is most minute, never mentions it; and the pavement, which is of the date of Sep. Severus's reign, has a drain below the aperture to carry off the rain water, which, had it been closed, would have been unnecessary.

But whatever may be the general opinion on this head, these learned gentlemen inculcate one doctrine, which seems manifestly absurd, viz. that the people were never allowed to enter the door of a temple, and that priests alone possessed that privilege.

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* And yet they might have found, in Livy's description of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, that the God Terminus could not be worshipped without an aperture in the roof.

Have they then forgotten that the Curia and the Rostra were consecrated as temples,—that it was not lawful for the Senate to convene, except in places consecrated as temples—and that they frequently held their meetings in the most sacred temples of the gods? And granting the improbable supposition that all the Senators were priests;—were all the conspirators leagued with Catiline, whom they tried in the Temple of Concord,—all the foreign ambassadors, whom they received in the Temple of Bellona,—all the Roman virgins, who learnt their hymns in the Temple of Jupiter Stator,*—all the rejoicing crowds, who filled the temples to give thanks for the Victory of Scipio Africanus over Hannibal,†—and all the weeping suppliants, who burst open the doors of the temples at midnight to offer supplications and thanks for the imaginary safety of the idolized Germanicus,‡—were all these priests also? And was this magnificent building, with its lofty columns, its beautiful statues, its inlaid walls, and its pavement of the rarest marbles, never beheld but by the eyes of priests?

I would not believe it,—no—not if all the anti-

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* Livy, lib. xxvii. c. 36. vol. iv.

† Livy, lib. xxx. c. 40. At chap. 17, of the same book, Livy however mentions, that the Prætor decreed that the temples should be opened, and the people be at liberty to enter them and return thanks to the gods.

‡ Vide Tacitus—Annals of Tiberius's reign, who mentions this circumstance in describing the unparalleled affliction of the people at the death of this justly beloved hero. I cannot remember chapter and verse.

quaries in Rome were to swear it to me. At the same time I would willingly credit any thing in reason, and by no means wish to get into a quarrel with them. It is certain, that the Cella of every temple, excepting those of Vesta, was generally dark, and lighted only by lamps; and it is very singular that this, which was dedicated to Jupiter, should have an aperture at the top at all, and that having such an aperture, the bronze grate above the door should be perforated, since it could neither be necessary for light or ventilation.

But these inconsistencies I leave to be cleared up by abler heads than mine. In the mean time, I am growing (for me) very learned, and consequently very dull; and, therefore, I will only observe, that the original gates of the Pantheon are said to have been carried off by Genseric during the sack of Rome by the Vandals; but those which it has at present are also ancient, and are supposed to have been taken from some other Roman building.

Over the whole of this once magnificent interior, the marks of age and neglect, and slow consuming time, are now but too apparent. Its brilliance, if not its beauty, has vanished. The sculptured silver that embossed its roof, the statues that filled its niches, and the columns of Syracusan bronze that sustained its attic, are all gone; and perhaps it is not less the remembrance of what it once was, than the sight of what it now is, that touches our feelings while we linger within its walls. Its four grand recesses, each supported by two magnificent co-

lumns, and two pilasters of giallo antico, are truly beautiful; but the eight little cavities, or altar-places, between them, with ugly pediments, and paltry little porphyry pillars, are wretchedly mean, and in a taste very unlike the grandeur of the rest of the edifice. Their date is ascribed to the reign of Septimius Severus, who not only repaired, but altered this noble building. The present pavement is also supposed to be his; indeed, the quantity of porphyry it contains is one proof of it, for it is a curious fact, that it was a substance, the use of which was very rare in the best ages, but which gradually increased as taste declined.

Eighteen centuries have left their traces—and, more than all—their dirt behind; most grievous, indeed, is it to see the filthy state in which it is kept; and if I might be allowed to come in with a heretical mop, I would have a pleasure in scouring it at my own expense, and almost with my own hands; and restoring to its marble columns, and walls, and pavement, no inconsiderable portion of their ancient freshness and brilliancy. It is inconceivable what a renovation might be made by soap and water. That it has never been washed since it was a Christian place of worship, is a lamentable fact. Catholics seem to think that there is a great sanctity in dirt. The only attempt towards cleanliness that has been ever made; that of whitewashing the roof, had better have been spared.

Behind the altars that crowd the principal recesses, are placed, on shelves, the busts of the most distinguished poets, artists, and philosophers of

modern Italy; a generous tribute offered by the unaided munificence of Canova, to the kindred departed spirits of his country. But the littleness of busts, and the minuteness of their arrangement on shelves, do not suit the grandeur of the character of this place. We wish to see it once more adorned with noble statues—and we wish, oh, how vainly! to banish all the trumpery shrines that insult, with their tawdry tinsel, this glorious edifice! It may seem ungrateful to quarrel with the very instruments that unquestionably saved it from destruction; but to see the dusty altars, frippery Madonnas, and faded old artificial flowers that lumber up the recesses—the pasteboard figures of saints that fill the attic niches above, or the loathsome living objects that crawl about the marble pavements below,—and not to exclaim against popes, popery, and priesthood,—surpasses human patience!

I verily believe these beggars live here; forever are we persecuted with the same horrible objects, and assailed with the same doleful whine of—"Qualche cosa per l'amore di Dio!"

Why did not the French, who had no great respect for altars, and never encouraged beggars, clear it out of all these nuisances?

Why did they not convert it, as its name would seem to indicate, into a temple sacred to the illustrious dead?

The taste of Canova would have dictated this great improvement, which has been long and ardently desired. Indeed, the preservation and em-

bellishment of the Pantheon have seemed to be dear to every mind of genius, in every age. Raphael bequeathed a sum of money for its repair; so did Anniba Caracci, and man y other distinguished artists; but it appears all to have gone to the Madonna and the martyrs; to priests and masses.

Many of those whose names reflected lustre upon Modern Italy in her proudest days, are interred here.

The mortal remains of Raphael, and that last and noblest work of his genius—the Transfiguration—were placed together in the church for three successive days after his untimely death, and admired and mourned by thousands. Here, too, he was buried; but in vain I enquired for his tomb; in vain I sought it through the Rotonda; no traces of it met the eye, nor could one of the Italians who were present shew me where it was to be found!

> "And what—no monument, inscription, stone,
> The very earth that wraps his grave unknown?"

I returned afterwards to the Pantheon with a friend, who pointed out to me the stone beneath which his remains repose; no tomb has been raised over them. His bust, among the undistinguished crowd, upon a shelf above the neighbouring altar, is the only tribute paid to his memory in the city that was embellished by his genius, and honoured with his dust. Beneath it is inscribed Cardinal Bembo's famous distich:

" Ille hic est Raphael, timuit quo sospite vinci
Rerum magna parens, quo moriente mori."

It has been very faithfully translated into Italian; and I have attempted (this moment only) something like it in English:

Nature, in life, saw thee herself outvie,
Yet, Raphael! feared, in death with thee to die.

LETTER XXIII.

TEMPLES—REPUTED TEMPLE OF VESTA—PUDICITIA PATRIZIA—BOCCA DELLA VERITA—ARA MAXIMA—TEMPLE OF FORTUNA VIRILIS—OF ANTONINUS AND FAUSTINA—OF ROMULUS AND REMUS—OF PEACE—ANCIENT STYLES OF BUILDING—DOUBLE TEMPLE OF VENUS AND ROME—TEMPLE OF MINERVA MEDICA—OF VENUS AND CUPID—OF VENUS ERYCINA.

From the Pantheon, I must now carry you to the Temple of Vesta, for such is the name the antiquaries of yore were pleased to give to a beautiful little temple near the Tiber, and such is the name it still bears, in despite of the antiquaries of the present day, who are now waging fierce battles about the different gods and goddesses to whom it might, could, or ought to have belonged. The claims of Phœbus, and Venus; of Portumnus, God of the Port, and Volupia, whose image, treading Virtue under foot, was certainly worshipped somewhere at Rome—very little to the credit of the Romans—have at various times been brought forward; but at present the contest seems to lie between Her-

cules and Vesta. The goddess has at least possession in her favour, and the defenders of her ancient rights maintain that hers it must be, because it was circular, and all the temples of Vesta were circular; and because it had windows, and the temples of Vesta alone had windows; and because it had an aperture at the top, and no other temple had an aperture at the top. The assailants, on the other hand, dispute the antiquity of the windows—deny the aperture at the top—bring Pliny to prove that the Temple of Hercules was circular also, and that it stood somewhere hereabouts—and wonder how any body can doubt that this is the Temple of Hercules.

To the confusion of these Heraclidæ, the party of Vesta again bring weighty testimony to shew that the Temple of Hercules stood in the Forum Boarium—that the limits of that Forum did not nearly extend to this spot; and since, therefore, it is not the Temple of Hercules, they conceive that it must indubitably be that of Vesta.

What, amid such contradictory assertions, are those who know nothing of the matter to believe?

> "Who shall decide when doctors disagree,
> And *antiquarians* doubt—like *Ré* and *Nibby*?"

For my part, I shall not "halt between the two opinions," being firmly convinced that it was neither the one nor the other. For, as to the Temple of Hercules, which stood "somewhere hereabouts," so did fifty other temples beside; and, as

to the Temple of Vesta, there is not a shadow of reason to believe that it ever stood here at all; or, indeed, that there ever was any Temple of Vesta at Rome, except the ancient one originally built by Numa, and which unquestionably stood at the base of the Palatine Hill in the Forum.* All classic authors speak of *the* Temple of Vesta, as if there were only one; and if another had ever been built, we cannot doubt such an event would have been recorded. When Tacitus relates that *the* Temple of Vesta was burnt down and rebuilt in the reign of Nero, it is obvious that if there had been more than one temple, he would have particularised which; and when Horace alludes to a flood of the Tiber reaching even to the Temple of Vesta, as a memorable occurrence, it is also clear that he could not mean this temple on the very shore of the river, and almost every year overflowed by its waters, but the Temple of Vesta in the Forum, to which, though a remarkable, it was by no means an unprecedented, circumstance that they should reach; for in ancient times many more terrible inundations are recorded; and not to multiply instances, Livy relates that the Tiber overflowed not only the Forum, but all the low grounds of the city, and the whole plain of the Campus Martius, twelve times in one year.† In modern ages, too, in the Pontificate of Clement VII., a flood happened which

* Vide Plutarch's Life of Numa Pompilius.

† A U. 564. Vide Livy, Dec. iv. l. 33.

compelled the inhabitants of Rome to fly in the middle of the night to the highest of her hills.*

Still, I am clearly of opinion, that since it has got the name of the Temple of Vesta, it should keep it; especially as we have no means of giving it a better, and never now can know what it is.

Be it what it may, it is beautiful. It is entirely built of Parian marble, and its portico is composed of a circular colonnade of twenty fluted Corinthian columns; but the entablature has long since disappeared; and though the French removed the vile modern wall that filled up the intercolumniation, the flat coarse tiled roof that still rests upon the graceful capitals, destroys much of their fine effect.

Within the colonnade, the small circular cella, built also of marble, is now converted into a chapel, dedicated to "La Madonna dell' Sole," (the Virgin of the Sun,) a curious coincidence with its reputed ancient worship of the Virgin Goddess of Fire. This little temple is supposed, from its style, to belong to the age of Domitian.

It stands in that part of ancient Rome, which was called the Pulchrum litis, or beautiful shore of the Tiber; but which no longer enjoys or merits that epithet.

Opposite to this beautiful building stands the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, built on the ruins of some ancient temple certainly, but of what, the antiquarians themselves do not even pretend to

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* The Quirinal. Vide Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini.

know; but they do know that it was not the Temple of Pudicitia Patrizia, as it is generally called, because there was no such temple; that divinity having only had a Sacellum, or, at most, an Ædicola. You will please to remember that an Ædicola was a small covered place of worship, bearing much the same relation to a Pagan temple that a chapel does to a Christian church, and a Sacellum differed from it only in being open.

But the remains of the ruin, entombed within the frightful old church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, prove that it was a magnificent peripteral temple, with eight columns in front, like the Parthenon; and like it, too, it must have had fifteen at the sides, counting the angular one both ways, because the intercolumniations of the sides were always double in number to those of the front. Few of these lateral columns are now visible, but six of the front columns may still be traced, built up in the wall of the church, and two more are to be seen in the sacristy, to which it is well worth while to ascend, to behold the beautiful Composite capitals of Parian marble, which are walled up in this wretched hole.

It was a strange perversity of taste, that could barbarously build up these noble columns of the ancient peristyle, and erect immediately in front of them, that mean little portico which now stares us in the face with its ugliness and deformity! Even though emphatically assured that it was the work of Saint Adrian I., (one of those works I suppose for which he was canonized,) we were unanimous-

ly reviling his memory for the deed, and arguing on the propriety of levelling the whole hideous fabric of Santa Maria in Cosmedin with the ground, in order to bring to light these beautiful remains of antiquity, when an old priest, who was sitting in a corner, and who had profited by our conversation, which was carried on in Italian, on account of two Italians who were with us, was so shocked by its profaneness, that he actually cast his eyes up to heaven with an exclamation of horror, and putting on his cap in act to go, as if he expected the roof to fall down upon his head, could not be stopped by the information that we were "Lutherani!" which, for the sake of our Italian friends, we dealt out to him, but muttered, as he went down the stairs, "Lutherani! si! è vann' tutti, giù, giù, giù——"*

This hideous church, which St Adrian built up, and which we wanted to pull down, has the reputation of being the place in which St Augustin taught rhetoric before he went to Britain; from whence it is called the Scuola di Sant' Agostino, and you are shown the very chair he sat in.

Ancient columns of various kinds and proportions, taken from unknown edifices, line the nave, which also contains two ambones, or marble pulpits, common in all the early churches, and an ugly black image of the Madonna, with a Greek

* "Ay! Lutherans truly! and they'll go down—down—down"—(to the lowest pit.)

inscription; the work of Greek artists of the barbarous ages, and supposed to be the most ancient Madonna in Rome.

In the portico of this church, is a flat round slab of white marble, with holes in the centre for eyes, mouth, and nose, exactly resembling the common representations of the face of the sun. It is called "La Bocca della Verita," and gives this name to the whole piazza. Great was its fame as a touchstone of truth among the vulgar of Rome, who believed—but their faith seems now to be wavering—that whoever put his hand into its mouth, and took a false oath, would never more be able to withdraw it.

This veracious Bocca is supposed to have been the mouth of a common sink, and we fancied we could trace the marks worn upon it by the constant tread of feet.

The "Ara Maxima," the great altar,—sacred to Hercules for his victory over Cacus,—"consecrated," says Tacitus, "by Evander, the Arcadian, to Hercules, then a deity alive and on the earth,"—included by Romulus within the furrow drawn by his ploughshare,—and venerated from the earliest to the latest period of Roman story;—this famous Ara Maxima is supposed to have stood immediately behind the Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, at the base of this angle of the Palatine.*

* The ancients seem to have had a remarkable superstition respecting Hercules, from which one might almost be inclined to deduce the origin of tithes, if their foundation was not

Sixtus IV. knocked down an old ruin here, supposed—but it was mere supposition—to have been the Temple of Hercules. And near here was found the bronze, gilt, and probably very ancient statue of Hercules, now in the Museum of the Capitol; but it could not have been that statue of the god worshipped in his temple in the Forum Boarium, for Macrobius tells us it was veiled, and this has its head uncovered.*

The neighbouring church of Santa Maria Egyziaca has been formed out of another ancient temple; which I may, perhaps, be allowed to call by its ordinary name, that of Fortuna Virilis, since even conjecture has never hit upon another. Not that any body imagines it really to be that temple; for, on the contrary, it is well known that the Temple of Fortuna Virilis stood in the Forum Boarium;† and this, according to the antiquaries, is without its bounds. It consists of seven fluted Ionic columns, elevated upon a high stylobata, or basement of Tiburtine stone, but half sunk in the wall that fills up the intercolumniations which have formed the site of the ancient temple. The

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known in the Mosaic law. The Carthaginians were in the habit of sending a vessel, loaded with one-tenth of the produce of their land, every year as an offering to the Tyrian Hercules, and it was by no means uncommon amongst the Romans, to dedicate a tenth of their possessions to that god, in the expectation of a return of a hundred fold. See Livy, Dec. ii. l. xvi. c. 5, and also his account of the Ara Maxima.

* Macrobius Saturnali, lib. iii. † Livy, l.

four columns of the portico are now concealed by the end wall and entrance of the church. It is worth remark, that the volutes are angular in these columns, which is generally considered a modern innovation; and, as far as I know, this is the only instance of it in the ancient Ionic. The solidity and plainness of this structure, have induced many to consider it a work of the Republic, in which they pay that age no great compliment; for Winkelman calls it, "Il più peggio di tutti," the worst of all ancient Roman buildings. If really Republican, however, it is the most ancient temple remaining at Rome. All the rest are unquestionably of the empire, and are of marble, which was never in use till the age of Augustus. It may therefore, perhaps, give some countenance to the belief of its higher antiquity, that it alone is of stone.

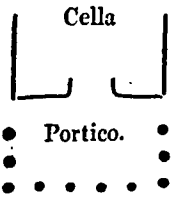
We next proceeded to the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, situated in that wide and ruin-covered spot, that now bears the name of the Roman Forum, although this temple stands without its ancient limits,—as I think I before observed,—only I can believe you may have forgotten it. That it is the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, the inscription on the frieze proves beyond all doubt, and it is the only temple in Rome, except the Pantheon, the identity of which is known with certainty, because the only one on which the inscription remains; but even with that inscription, in legible characters, staring one in the face, the ingenious heads of the antiquaries have found matter of dispute, in

the question of which Antoninus it belonged to, whether Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, both of them unluckily having had a Faustina to wife, and both, of course, having been deified. While the question was arguing, with great learning and at great length, I happened to cast my eyes from the beautiful sculptured frieze of this temple, and its majestic columns, to the pitiful Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus; and the striking contrast of the beauty of the one with the meanness of the other, filled me with amazement at the rapid degradation that must have taken place in the fine arts, during the twenty-one years only that elapsed between the death of Marcus Aurelius and that of Septimius Severus. Yet, not only this temple, but all the sculpture of the reign of the former emperor, is extremely fine,* while that of the age of Septimius Severus is uniformly execrable.

The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, is the latest fine specimen of architecture which remains to this day. Its portico, which has evidently suffered from fire, is composed of six Corinthian columns of Cipollino marble in front, united to the

* The Triumphal Column of Marcus Aurelius,—the equestrian statue—the bas reliefs that adorned his Triumphal Arch—now on the staircase at the Palazzo de' Conservatori; and those, still finer, in the grand saloon of the Villa Albani, may be taken as fair specimens of the sculpture of his age; and these are very little inferior to the best sculpture of the times of Trajan or Hadrian.

cella of the temple, by two on each side in depth, in this manner:



It would appear from the order of this Temple, and from the frieze which is carried along the small portion of the side wall of the cella which remains, that the Posticum was precisely similar, in its portico, entrance, &c., to the front; but, of course, this cannot now be ascertained. The cella is built of large square blocks of peperin stone, fixed together without cement.

This Temple is one of the long line of those which stood on the Via Sacra, between which, however, and their porticos, there must have been the area, which was in front of every temple, and in which the altar of sacrifice was always situated.

The neighbouring church of S. S. Cosmo and Damiano, is partly formed out of one of the ancient temples which stood on the Sacred Way, which is generally supposed to have been the double Temple of Romulus and Remus. The first building has been circular, the second square; but the upper part of the walls of the Temple, forms the lower

part of those of the church; for the pavement being continued nearly in a level with the present surface of the ground, which is far elevated above the ancient level, leaves one half of the Temple below it. To this, now a subterranean beneath the church, we were conducted by one of the lay brothers of the convent, after he had performed various genuflexions before the high altar, and lighted a wax taper. The circular part is called the Temple of Remus; and the square part beyond it, the Temple of Romulus. Here was found the marble plan of Rome, which had formed the pavement of the Temple, and the broken fragments of which, without any attempt at arrangement, are now fixed in the staircase wall of the Museum of the Capitol.

Having gazed round at these dreary vaults, and seen nothing, I was for coming back content; but our conductor carried us "deeper and deeper still," to a dungeon below these dungeons—conjectured to have been the Adytum of the ancient Temple—containing an altar where mass is said to have been performed by the bishops, during the persecutions of the Christians; in which case, I think, they must inevitably have sustained martyrdom from the chilling damps, which made our teeth clatter in our head during the few moments we remained.

At the door of this church, is an ancient Roman gate of bronze. Two old columns of Cipollino marble, half buried in the earth, at the door-way of an adjoining oratorio; for a wonder, are not even reputed to be any thing ancient, but are acknowled-

ged to have been brought from some unknown Roman ruin in modern days, and sunk here.

The Temple of Peace; which, on pursuing the course of the Via Sacra, we next come to; is not allowed, by the antiquaries of the present day, to be a temple at all.

They can neither make it out to be a Hypæthros, like the Pantheon; nor a circular Peripteros, like the little Temple of Vesta; nor a Prostylos, nor an Amphi Prostylos; nor a Dypteros, nor a Pseudo Dypteros; nor any of Vitruvius's fourteen orders of temples, nor any description of temple whatsoever; nor can they find out any possibility of its ever having had any of the three necessary constituent parts of a temple—the cella, the portico, and the area—not to mention that it had windows, which they will by no means allow to any temple, except those of Vesta.

Certainly, its form, and the disposition of its parts, bear no resemblance to any known temple of antiquity. But how few are those of which the ruins or the description have come down to the present time?

Nor did the ancients bind themselves so slavishly to these general rules, as modern critics pretend. A thousand aberrations from architectural laws might be instanced—and why should not the form of a temple be one?

Winkelman, who seems never to question the identity of this ruin with the Temple of Peace, gives it as one instance of temples with three naves,

and mentions Jupiter Capitolinus as another; adding, that such temples had always vaulted roofs.*

But even if it were a temple, the antiquaries will not allow that it could be Vespasian's Temple of Peace, because, they say, the style of architecture, and the clumsiness of the brick work, prove it to have been an erection of a much later period; and because—which is a much more incontrovertible reason—the Temple of Peace was burnt down in the time of Commodus. I am sorry I cannot remember the authority that was given me for this assertion, nor recover the antiquary that made it. Even if correct, the Temple of Peace might have been rebuilt after that period, and though Procopius speaks of it as a ruin in his time, that does not prove that it is not a ruin in ours.

To my humble thinking, however, this ruin bears a decided resemblance to a Basilica; and as the Forum of Peace, like every other Forum, must have had a Basilica, I thought this might be it, and plumed myself upon the notion. But when I communicated it to some learned antiquaries, they declared, that though the ruin bore every appearance of being the remains of a Basilica, it must, from the style of the architecture, be the Basilica—not of Vespasian, but of Constantine—who built one on the Via Sacra, and near the Temple of Venus and Rome; and as its situation exactly corresponds with this, they maintained that, *sicuramente*, it was

* Winkelman, Observations sur l'Architecture des Anciens, chap. i. 872.

the remains of Constantine's Basilica, which was pompously described by one of his panegyrists, and adorned with all the magnificence which the arts at that degraded period were capable of exhibiting.

Volumes might, and, indeed, have been written, about these three clumsy brick vaults; but I wish to trouble you no farther with them, except to observe, in support of their hypothesis, that the poverty of the architecture, in which immensity of size is called in as a substitute for grandeur of design—the irregularity of the arches, which are of different span—and the badness of the masonry, are perhaps more conclusive arguments than you may be aware of, that this structure is the work of a declining age, far posterior to that of Vespasian. In the best state of the arts, the beauty and solidity of the mason work is not less conspicuous than the perfection of the plan. The very bricks of the age of Augustus, Nero, and Titus, are easily distinguishable from those of a later period. Brick work was then put together with very little cement, and stone walls without any.

The reticulated style of building, which was far the most beautiful and durable of any, was in general use towards the close of the Republic, and during the Augustan age. After the reigns of the twelve Cæsars, it became more rare, but was employed by Hadrian in almost all his splendid edifices. After his death it was scarcely ever used, and certainly never after the time of Caracalla.

It was formed of stone, cut into small regular squares, and built in diamond fashion, exhibiting

the appearance of net-work, from which it derived its name. It was always made of the common stone of the country. At Rome, we invariably find it of tufo; at Tivoli, of travertine.

So solid was the structure, that it must have been a work of greater labour to have destroyed reticulated walls, than to have erected them.*

As a proof of the superiority of the masonry, as well as the architecture of the early period of the Empire, the most ancient walls which now remain are the best preserved. The brick walls of the Palace of the Cæsars, and the Baths of Titus, look as fresh as if they had been built yesterday; and we can scarcely believe that they have stood nearly eighteen centuries. In these buildings, in the Temple of Venus beside the Circus of Sallust, and in almost every ruin of similar date, the brick walls are strengthened and supported by blind arches,

* Vitruvius objects to this style of building its want of durability, but experience has disproved his censure. "Sarà difficile," which in Italian always means impossible,—"Sarà difficile," said an old cardinal whom I met the other day in his afternoon walk on the Trinità di Montà,—shaking his head at the broken reticulated walls of the Roman villas, which recent levellings to form a promenade have brought to light, and which he sorely lamented could not be removed; because without these "murà antiche," he observed, "the Veduta would be "bellissima;" ma "più antica più forte," he added as he walked on, his attendant priests obsequiously echoing the sentiment, and following his lead in conversation as closely, as the old coach and black horses, with their red trappings, did his steps.

which at first have the appearance of arches, built up—but are decisive proofs of the best age of Roman architecture. The buildings of that period seem intended for incalculable duration; and if violence had not destroyed what was secure against the attacks of time, they would have been the admiration of the present, and of many a future age. But man has always been the destroyer of the works of man.

In an excavation made in 1812, beneath the ruins denominated the Temple of Peace, some remains of Roman houses were found, adorned with paintings, supposed to be of the age of Septimius Severus.

I do not lay much stress upon this fact, which would at once prove this building to be of subsequent date, and consequently not Vespasian's Temple of Peace, because I do not see how it could be so exactly ascertained that the paintings were the work of Severus's reign.

In a former excavation,* in the court of the Mendicanti, behind the Temple of Peace, was discovered, the workshop of a Roman sculptor, chiefly filled with the busts and statues of the emperors and their families, many of which were unfinished. The place is filled up, and the sculpture conveyed to different museums; but it must have been a sight almost similar in interest to the shops of Pompeii.

The Temple of Peace, which far exceeded every

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* Made in 1780.

other both in magnitude and magnificence, it is well known, was decorated with the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, and indeed built to receive them. But, by a curious destiny, it would seem that these spoils reverted back to the very spot from which they had been taken. Genseric, at his sack of Rome, carried them to Africa; Belisarius won them from him, and used them to grace his triumphal entrance into Constantinople; and finally, Justinian sent them to various Christian churches in Jerusalem.*

Amongst its other treasures, the Temple of Peace had a very fine library, which is supposed to have been burnt with the building.

The famous statue of the Nile, described by Pliny, with the sixteen little Loves upon it to figure out the sixteen cubits its waters rise during the annual inundation, also stood in it. There is a very fine ancient copy of it in marble, in the statuary magazine of the Vatican. The original was of black basalt.

The remains of the double temple near the Coliseum, answer so accurately in situation and plan to that pointed out by historians, and given by the medal, of Hadrian's magnificent Temple of Venus and Rome, that the most sceptical seem to be convinced of their identity.

Every thing that Hadrian did was splendid, and this was one of the most splendid of his works, and planned by himself. It stood on the Via Sacra,

* Vide Nardini, Roma Antica, l. iii. c. 12.

(which encircled it on two sides,) facing, in opposite directions, the Coliseum and Rome.

The peristyles of this double peripteral temple had twelve columns in front, and twenty-two in depth, of Parian marble, some broken remains of which we observed among the ruins. The whole was surrounded at a considerable distance with a double colonnade, five hundred feet in length, and three hundred in breadth, formed of columns of oriental granite, with bases and capitals of Parian marble, the gigantic shafts of which, broken and scattered, are strewed around, and lay in numbers near Titus's arch. We can still trace the platform where this magnificent colonnade stood, and the situation, and even the steps, which led to the temple.

The beauty of the roof we may yet admire, and fancy may replace the shattered column and the fallen capital,—but can these eloquent mementos of taste and magnificence reflect a lustre on the memory of Hadrian, when we reflect that his inhuman vengeance doomed to death the unfortunate artist that presumed to criticise the plan of this temple, and arraigned the perfection of a work of a tyrant?

Better would it have been for Apollodorus, had he, following the example of a more prudent Roman slave, been wise enough "not to have had more *taste* than one who had millions at his bidding."

The patronage of Hadrian to arts and letters, has rendered his memory dear, undeservedly dear, to men of taste and genius in every age; and there

are some, whom even historical testimony* cannot convince, that the great, the enlightened Hadrian, could be capable of a deed of such monstrous atrocity; yet we may easily believe, that he, who, with perfidious ingratitude, could deliberately poison the virtuous wife to whom he owed the very power he abused, would not scruple to sacrifice such a victim to his offended vanity.

The ancient bronze of this double temple was carried off by Pope Honorius I. to adorn the ancient Church of St Peter's.

In a lonely vineyard on the Esquiline Hill stands the picturesque ruin called the Temple of Minerva Mëdica. Its form, though circular without, is decagonal within. It is built of brick, and is now stripped of every ornament. But the yawning chasms in its vaulted roof, the wild weeds that wave over it, the fallen masses that choak it up, the total destruction that threatens, and the solitude that surrounds it, give it an interest and a charm it probably never could have owned in a state of perfect preservation.

In the days when it was the fashion to call every ruin a temple, this was called a temple; when baths came into vogue, this was called a bath; and now that basilicas are all the rage, it is called a basilica. Its name, however, does, and will continue to be the Temple of Minerva Medica, which specific appellation it received, because, among many other statues, a statue of Minerva, with a serpent at her

* Dion mentions the fact.

fect,* was discovered here. Even the identity of the goddess has been called in question. "I don't believe that statue to be Minerva Medica," said a celebrated antiquary to me one day when we were looking at the plaister cast at the bottom of the staircase of the Palazzo Luciano, "I don't believe it. The serpent might have many mystical meanings, and I think I have found out the true one. It alludes to the transformation of Erycthonius into a serpent."

Now, I always understood that the Athenian king had serpents' tails instead of legs, but never that he was changed into the entire reptile. But this my learned friend would by no means allow, and I had no desire to contest the point.

The statue in question passed from the ruined house of Giustiniani to the rising family of the Buonapartes, but it has been transferred from Prince Lucian to the Pope, and is now in the Magazine of the Vatican, where the sculpture for which there is no room, awaits the building of a new gallery.

There is a fountain of modern date, made by the peasants to water their vineyards and their asses; besides which, the lower part of the ruin is continually wet with a copious natural spring. Searching in the centre of it, among the long grass and weeds which grow luxuriantly in the watered ground, we found a carved sort of basin, about nine inches above the ground; and on further investigation, discovered the marble rams' heads

* Not twisted about her legs, as Forsyth describes.

through which the water had flowed out of this reservoir.

For what purpose it may have served, I shall not pretend to say. I would not upon any account insinuate that it was a bath, because the antiquaries say that it was impossible; but perhaps this circumstance, joined to its curved and circular form, and the aggregate number of statues found here,—which were favourite ornaments of baths,—might tend to impress vulgar minds with the notion: not that it was ever supposed to have formed a part of any of the grand Thermæ of Rome, but of some smaller and less sumptuous baths, whose waters were probably considered peculiarly salubrious and medicinal, as they were under the special protection of Minerva Medica,—if Minerva Medica she be.

Nardini's conjecture is, in my opinion, by far the most rational, viz. that this building (whether a bath or no bath) formed a part of the Palace of Licinius, which unquestionably stood here,* for Santa Bibiana was martyred in it, and her church, built upon the very spot of her martyrdom, stands hard by this ruin. It is evident, too, that it has been connected with other buildings, for remains of walls diverging on either side of it are still visible. The style of the architecture, and the comparative coarseness of the brick work, betray the declining period of the art. The form of the arch

* Vide Anastasius, and Nardini's Roma Antica.

is of that date. The best judges pronounce it certainly not to be earlier than the age of Diocletian, so that every circumstance tends to corroborate the supposition, that even if it were a bath, it belonged to the palace of the last Pagan emperor.

The ruin in the vineyard adjoining Santa Croce in Gierusalemme on this hill, which was demolished in order to build up that church, is called the Temple of Venus and Cupid; not that it bears the least resemblance to a temple, but merely because a group of Venus and Cupid, now in the Vatican, was found here. As this group, however, has proved to be the statue of Sallustia, the wife of Alexander Severus, with her son, under the figure of those deities, the circumstance of finding it in this building, alone forms a sufficient presumption, that it was *not* that temple, since surely no mortal woman would presume to place her own image as Venus, in the very sanctuary of the goddess.

In truth, a few broken brick walls are all that remain of it; but the antiquarians, who can no longer find in it a temple, now see the form of a tribune, discern the windows, and trace the plan of a basilica; and as the Tribunal Sessorium, established by Claudius, was somewhere hereabouts, they suppose these walls to be its vestiges.

The remains of the Temple of Venus Erycina, consisting only of the octagonal brick cella, still stand in the circus and gardens of Sallust. Our doubts as to its identity are nearly removed, for not only the statue of the goddess, but a very deci-

sive inscription* was found here; and the situation of this ruin, within the present walls of the city, but beyond the ancient Porta Collina, exactly corresponds with that pointed out by Livy† and Ovid‡ for the Temple of Venus Erycina, to which the Roman women annually went in solemn procession, bearing their gifts, and offering their supplications.

The cella of this temple has been as usual dark, light having only been admitted by the door. The brick work is evidently that of an undegenerated age, and, therefore, we may conclude it to be of the early period of the empire.

In exploring it, we found some little secret passages and hidden recesses in the walls, running behind the great niche in which stood the image of the goddess, and apparently intended to communicate with other chambers and buildings, which wonderfully excited our curiosity; but we could not settle for what mysterious purpose they had

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It is as follows:

M. AVRELIVS. PACORVS
ET. M. COCCEIVS. STRATOCLES. AEDITVI
VENERIS. HORTORVM. SALVSTIANORVM
BASEM. CUM. PAVIMENTO. MARMORATO
DEANAE. D. D.

† Livy records its situation and dedication, lib. xl. c. 24. Dec. iii. Another temple to Venus Erycina had previously been erected, in the second Punic war, in the Capitol, l. xxiii. c. 24.

‡ In Fast. iii.

been designed, and none of the antiquaries whom we have consulted, could give us the smallest light upon it.

I have now mentioned all, and more than all the ruins of the Temples, or reputed Temples of Rome, which are worth notice. Many of them, which consist merely of decaying brick walls, I am far from thinking deserving of an express visit, or a particular description. You will see them in your excursions to other objects; but, to avoid confusion, I thought it best to run at once through the few shattered ruins that constitute the sole remains of the magnificent temples of Ancient Rome.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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